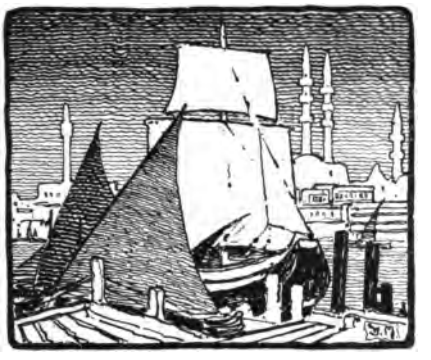
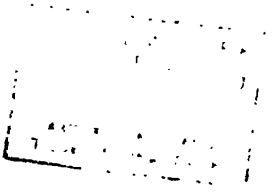
A CRUISE



ACROSS EUROPE



IN THE LAND OF
THE WILLOW FOREST

A CRUISE ACROSS EUROPE

NOTES ON A FRESHWATER VOYAGE FROM HOLLAND TO THE BLACK SEA BY DONALD MAXWELL WITH ONE HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR AND COTTINGTON TAYLOR

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TO

THE HON^BLE HENRY CHARLES CLEMENT DUNDAS, FORMERLY HIS MAJESTY'S VICE-CONSUL, GALATZ, ROUMANIA, IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF PERSONAL KINDNESS

PREFACE

Of all the navigable thoroughfares of Europe there is none so little known or so seldom used as the Ludwig's Canal, which lies in Bavaria between Bamburg and Kelheim.

This fact is the more remarkable because this waterway enables barges and small craft to climb to a height of over fifteen hundred feet from the sea and cross a mountain range by means of fortuous windings and bold leaps over wild and yawning chasms. It also unites the basins of the Rhine and Danube, and brings Holland within rowing distance of the Black Sea. It reveals a hundred miles of effective engineering, ancient as well as modern; for the canal was commenced by Charlemagne, who brought part of it to completion.

The possibility of sailing to the Near East by a freshwater route occurred to me as soon as I

" discovered " this interesting link. The following pages are simply a collection of notes and sketches made by the way.

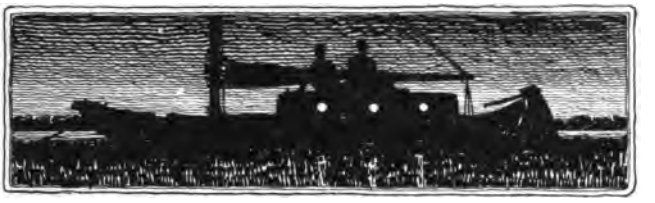
To the numerous strangers—too numerous to mention by name—who befriended the *Walrus* during her cruise, many thanks; especially to the members of the Union Rowing Club at Vienna, and the Duna Club at Buda Pest, whose exceptional kindness and hospitality cannot be easily forgotten.

DONALD MAXWELL.

THE MOORINGS,
EAST MOLESEY,
August 1906.

LIST OF CHAPTERS

List of Chapters



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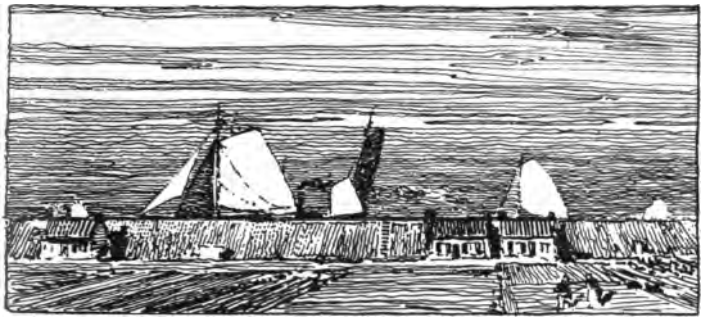


LIST OF MAPS

I

THE *WALRUS* OF

LONDON

I

THE *WALRUS* OF LONDON

In Willemstad, which is in Noord Brabant, which is in Holland, and against the workshop whereon the sails of the windmill cast moving shadows, a legend curiously wrought in green and white sets forth the fact that one Van Duivendyk pursues the calling of a *scheepsmaker*.

There are times, however, when this notice, except for the name displayed upon it, becomes ridiculously unnecessary on account of an overwhelming profusion of circumstantial evidence as to the nature of the business to which it calls attention.

It was so on a certain afternoon in January of this present year of grace, 1905.

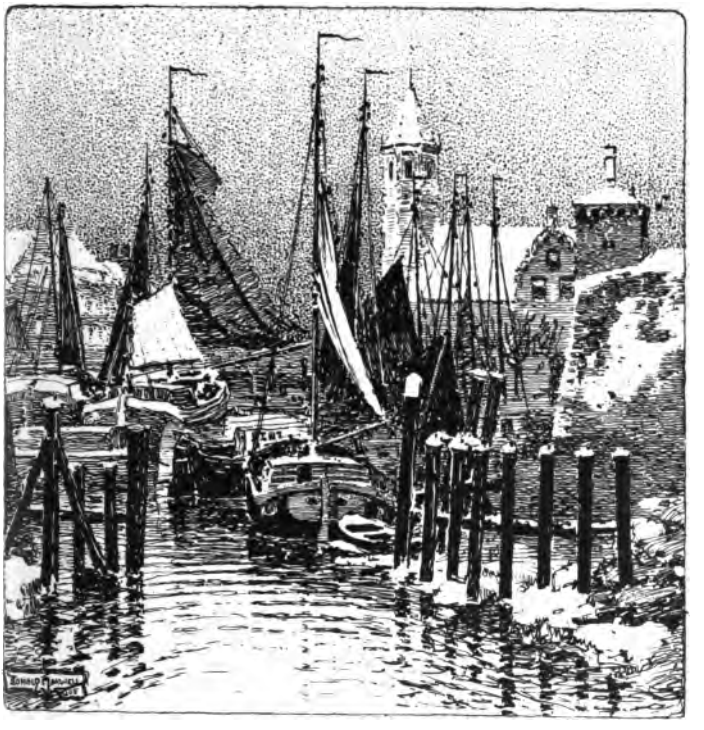
Anchors, masts, cables, and a thousand things of the sea lay piled up under the shelter of the shed,

and overflowed in wild confusion on the slips. A *schuit* with hull freshly caulked and resplendent with shining tar was drawn up high on the *scheepswerf*, and two giant rudders leaned against the house of the worthy master, so that it became unusually insignificant.

The crowded and confused state of the waterside in the neighbourhood of Mynheer's ship-repairing labours was, however, nothing to the inextricable muddle of barges and *schuits* in the harbour. A five days' frost had driven into shelter all sailing craft, and they lay huddled together unable to move a millimetre. Tide after tide had piled blocks of ice between them wherever a space was to be found, and thus effectively added to the general disorder.

The eye was confused by innumerable lines and dots made in the sky by masts and ropes, by tackle and streaming pennants. Sails, brown and tan, white, grey, black, and of other tints too complicated to describe without the aid of a paint-box were airing in the winter sunshine, and deck-houses, for the most part dazzlingly clean, formed a veritable town from which blue smoke rose here and there to indicate invisible domestic activity.

Not content with confining itself either to Mynheer Van Duivendyk's shipbuilding yard or even to the harbour, the reign of confusion had spread like an epidemic into other parts of the town. The male population of the floating village



WILLEMSTAD

was strongly represented in straggling groups on the quay, stolidly consuming in various ways large quantities of tobacco.

The *broodbakkerij* with the big green shutters was at its wits' end to know how to meet the demand for loaves which had been created by the sudden falling of the barometer: an event foretelling to the initiated the immediate break-up of the frost. This meant the sallying forth of the more enterprising skippers at the next morning's high tide to find a channel through the floes on Holland's Deep.

The *schippershuis* at the corner opposite was packed with bargemen discussing the change of weather. Every few minutes a babel of voices would be borne upon the air as the door burst open and discharged a number of weather prophets, who sauntered in small companies to the end of the quay and gazed fixedly at the ice-encumbered waters.

It was one of these who descried in the direction of the island Overflakkee a small boat with a tanned sail. At first it appeared that there was nothing at all unusual about her. Indeed so orthodox was she in the eyes of the local navigators that the majority took her for one of the smaller police boats. A fisherman, they argued, would not be found in such waters, and no sane person would be taking a cruise upon them for pleasure. Therefore it must be the police. But on what urgent business were they bound? To what purpose were they breaking their way through fields of floating ice?

The local policeman who had joined the group at the waterside looked hard at the craft for some moments as she beat up with difficulty towards Willemstad, and then an expression of triumph flashed across his face. He smiled and walked away. He alone had observed that there was one point about the rig of the stranger which differed from that of an ordinary service boat. She carried a gaff and boom, instead of a sprit, on her sail.

It was a little thing, scarcely noticeable at so great a distance, but before ten minutes had elapsed the Government of Holland had been informed by telephone of the significant fact.

Meanwhile, sublimely unconscious that her movements were being watched with interest, and in one quarter at least with suspicion, the unknown craft had been tacking towards the town. It was easy now to see that her lee-boards and top plank were green picked out with white; that, just forward of the steering-well, she carried a small white-roofed cabin that opened into the boat a few feet abaft the mast and that two men were aboard her. One of them was at the helm, while the other, dressed in oil-skins, at her bow, endeavoured with a boat-hook to ward off blocks of floating ice. The fortunate possessor of a telescope was able to make out more than this. He could read the name *Walrus* upon her bow, and upon her stern, when she went about, he reported *London*.

This last discovery redoubled the interest already

HE COULD READ
THE NAME *WALRUS*

manifested in the new arrival. The group of people on the quay, originally small, gradually assumed such proportions that it threatened to become what in Willemstad could be called a crowd. By the time the boat was on her last tack the half of the town which had been at home, came out to see at what phenomenon the other half was looking.

It was clearly impossible to squeeze anything more into the closely packed harbour. Even outside the water-gate there was little enough room for the broad fishing-boats and barges that lay two or three deep along the quay. A number of ropes, stretched from the outermost craft across what remained open of the narrow approach, effectively blocked the way.

The stranger, however, had evidently determined to make an entry. For half an hour her two occupants with quant and boat-hook whacked and thrust at the floating ice ahead of her, and inch by inch forced the boat along. Whenever she moved forward into the space cleared at her bow the floe closed in at her stern so that she had all the appearance of being on dry land, working her way through a snow-covered ploughed field. The onlookers watched the manœuvre with stolid interest, but did not offer any suggestion. When the *Walrus* of London was unable to make any further progress she was secured from bow and stern under the shadow of a *schuit.*

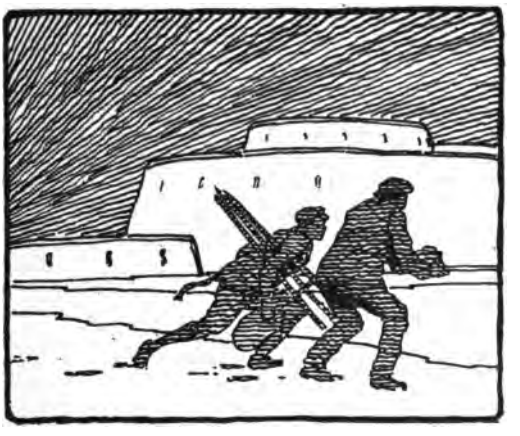
The crowd now expected the two strangers would attempt to land, but in entertaining this hope they were doomed to disappointment. Nothing happened of a more exciting nature than the total disappearance " below " of both Englishmen, and the issuing forth of a very small quantity of vapour from the galley chimney.

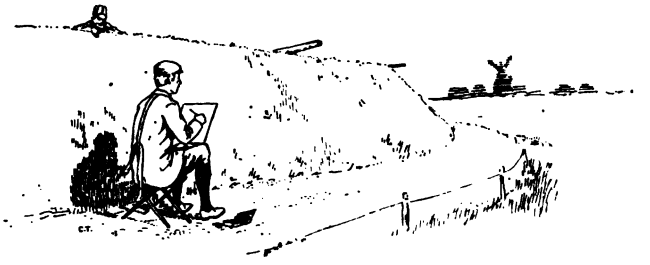
An hour's staring did not produce any effect and the ranks of the watchers gradually thinned, until when evening fell, and the twin port-holes of the big barge shone like fiery eyes looking down onto the new arrival, there remained only a little band of enthusiasts who lingered on in the expectation of some further development.

As for the rest, they had strolled off to discuss within walls the significance of the unknown craft. The novelty had worn off, but the mystery remained.

II

IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING





II

IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

THE interior of the *Walrus* of London was, as might be supposed, small. Yet it was surprising how much had been stowed away in a space nine feet by five and a half. There was a cupboard with shelves (at the after end), a bunk on each side under which stores of clothing had been packed in drawers, a stove on the port side (forward), and a miscellaneous corner opposite which contained a small bookcase, thus sanctioning the name "library"; but bottles, boots, and more or less washed-up tea-things generally seemed to be more prominent than books.

This was, however, in the region of the door only. The cupboard end aimed at luxury, for it was the possessor of a clock, barometer, letter-rack, and ink-stand, although it must be confessed the

uncompromising position of the latter within eight inches of the roof led to a great deal of correspondence in pencil.

Hypercritical visitors had sometimes remarked that there was not much head room. There was certainly some truth in the statement, but the captain resented it. He maintained that four feet was sufficient for perfect comfort. The fault lay, not with the boat, as he pointed out with some warmth to one of these objectors, but with a civilisation which had accustomed people, when they sat down, to do so on artificial supports devised by interested sellers of furniture, thus rendering difficult and even dangerous the natural expedient, still practised by the primitive races of mankind, of sitting upon the ground.

In addition to a small mirror, a number of charts, and a few sketches which were fixed to the walls, there also hung a list of fast days, for the most part quite unknown to any calendar in Eastern or Western Christendom, an ironical comment on the part of the mate upon the captain's frequent forgetfulness to lay in sufficient stores for the boat.

On this particular evening, however, possibly in response to the pathetic protest of his crew, the master of the *Walrus* had obtained food enough to provide for a short siege, as the abnormal condition of the galley testified. To such an opposite extreme from his usual carelessness had the captain gone that the mate was forced to expostulate on the

HE HAD INVESTED IN A PAIR OF ENORMOUS *SABOTS*

want of space: a feature so noticeable that it necessitated numerous articles being placed outside. He had invested in a pair of enormous *sabots* into which he usually got in the evenings for warmth; but these among other things, to his great annoyance, were "black-balled" by the captain. Dinner restored perfect harmony, however, and when twilight fell, the aroma of the kitchen gave way before blue clouds from the smoking-room. Kept in continual remembrance by the scrunching of ice against the boat that the original plan of his cruise had been rendered impossible, the master of the *Walrus* soon relapsed into somewhat gloomy meditation. From a drawer under his bunk he produced charts and maps which he proceeded to spread out into so goodly an expanse of geographical information that the whole cabin and all therein was covered as by a snow drift. Streams of smoke issuing from underneath a large bump showed where the almost obliterated mate struggled to preserve his individuality, while the captain made the litter worse and worse every moment as he turned over sheet after sheet in silence, scrutinising each, and making strange calculations in a note-book.

The *Walrus*, nearly a week before her present incarceration in the ice, had set out from a little sea-port, not far from Flushing. She was bound for the Black Sea, but instead of following nautical precedent as to her course, and sailing round Spain and through the Mediterranean she had determined

to reach the near East by devious windings through the Continent of Europe, by river and canal and across the Frankisher Jura Mountains, by means of Charlemange's ancient and almost unknown waterway, to the valley of the Danube.

Although it seemed a curious time of year to start on an inland cruise with its many discomforts and inevitable delays through frost, it was advisable in this case, owing to the length of time that would have to elapse between the start and the finish. It would obviously take some months to reach the Black Sea. The river swamps along the Danube in Roumania would be rendered impossible for any degree of comfort in camping out when the hot weather began, and with the ever-present danger of Malaria, hardly safe. For this reason the captain had decided to push on as far as possible into Germany by Rhine and Main before he was frozen up, so that when it thawed he would already have made a good start.

Some weeks delay in fitting out the boat had curtailed his chances of finding a clear course very far, but a spell of exceptionally mild weather, which seemed likely to continue, raised a hope of being able to reach Bavaria before the first stop.

The last few days, however, had altered everything. It only remained now to find a convenient spot for passing the time while waiting for the river to clear. Should the frost break up for good, ice

would continue to come down from the upper Rhine for a week or ten days.

When the old town clock struck the hour of nine, the interior of the *Walrus* presented a somewhat less littered appearance. Papers and maps had been packed away again, and the captain had lit a cigarette. The odour of a rival tobacco aroused the mate. He knew that with the captain, who was no lover of the weed, smoking was an indication of impending action.

"Well," he inquired, "what's our next move?"

"Dordrecht. It is probably going to thaw tomorrow. The barometer seems to show it, and everybody seems to expect a change. Should the frost set in again we shall be prisoners till goodness knows when. In any event we shall not be able to get up the Rhine. Therefore I propose we push on to Dordrecht, taking advantage of the morning's tide. This little place is all very well for a time, but I fear we should find it deadly dull after a few weeks."

The mate agreed to the proposition and the conversation turned to the subject of the dangers of the Danube.

"The great difficulty that I foresee," the mate pointed out, "is the fact that the river will probably be very high during the season we are on it, and its banks will be more or less obliterated. Consequently we shall run the risk of missing our course, and of then being left high and dry

on some miniature Ararat when the flood recedes."

"There is that danger, but, bar accidents, we shall get down all the quicker," returned the captain, who generally took an optimistic view. "Besides if we have plenty of depth we shall be better off among rocks and rapids. I am anxious to get up to our highest point, the Ludwig's canal, before the water begins to come down much; in the first place because we do not want a torrent against us, as we toil up the Main, and again because we might descend the worst part of the Danube before the floods are at their highest, and then, if we stick, the rising river will float us again."

It was one of the mate's grievances that the captain had not provided himself with a series of charts of the Danube. At present the Continental *Bradshaw* railway map was the only one which showed the river below Buda-Pest. "We can get something in the map line further on," was the invariable response to these complaints. On this occasion, however, the mate stuck to the point —that it was dangerous and foolish to attempt the navigation of a river, especially in flood-time without a chart, for he knew that the getting of a map further on meant that there would never be one.

"Do you suppose," retorted the captain after one of the mate's eloquent arguments, "that it will be possible to obtain a special flood-chart of

the Danube? An ordinary one would be perfectly useless. If there are buoys marking the course, we can see them and go by them. If these have been swept away by the flood it will be little good having a diagram to inform us where they ought to be, or what they would look like were they there!

"At sea a chart is indispensable I grant, but I do not share your childlike trust—beautiful as it may be—in river charts. A river in flood may alter its bed within a few hours, and it would be rather hard to issue charts to keep up with these changes. Remember, last time we were in difficulties on the Slikken Sand it was entirely owing to our going by the chart rather than common sense."

"I've brought *one* good series of maps showing the course from Rattisbon to Vienna, pursued the mate doggedly, "but that is only a small slice of the whole distance."

So saying he produced a small book full of apparently accurate information. The captain had to agree that it might be very useful, but the date 1899 was against it.

"Six years old," he said. "I know the sort of thing this is. The danger-marks for the shoals here are red buoys, while probably three years ago they were changed for green posts, and these in quite a different part of the river. When we are looking for the red buoys we shall be carried onto a sand-bank by going the wrong side of the green

posts, whereas if we went by the light of nature, we should avoid the obstacle successfully."

"But surely," the mate persisted, "you don't mean to negotiate the rapids and the Iron Gates without a map of any sort?"

"Local information," the captain replied, "is worth a hundred charts. We can take on a pilot if things look very dangerous. Anyhow, we are too far off at present to worry about it."

It was two days afterwards, at about 10 A.M., that the policeman at Willemstad again stood upon the end of the quay and watched the *Walrus* as she sailed slowly out of the harbour bound for Dordrecht. He had paid a visit to the boat early that morning, and although he could not complain of any lack of hospitality on the part of his host or of the old "Schiedam" offered to him by the mate (and accepted), yet his suspicions had been confirmed.

Without doubt the Englishmen were spies.

Had he not collected ample evidence of the fact? First of all, a report had been current among the fishermen of Tholen that the strangers were charting the banks and channels. They had been seen aground on the Slikken Sands, high and dry, making drawings. These were utterly unintelligible as pictures; therefore the probable explanation of their purpose was that they were for some kind of diagram of such a mysterious nature that it could be understood only by one who had the key. Then

they had anchored in the Volkerak, off Fort de Ruiter, and under cover of night—mark this, at night !—had landed on a waste piece of ground at Ooltgensplaat in Overflakkee, close under the fort. Here they had encamped for four days, taking photographs meanwhile and sketching. It is true that during that time they were hard frozen to the ground and could not have got off if they had desired it; but this was doubtless their artfulness.

Then they had made their way to the fortified town of Willemstad to play the same game. One of them dared even in broad daylight to take the ferry across Holland's Deep (making hurried notes in a book as the town receded) and visit Numansdorp, where another fort was close at hand.

This might all have been explained if they had been genuine painters. But was there any evidence of this ? The policeman, in order to verify the fishermen's statements regarding the so-called pictures, himself examined them. It was evident from a glance that the artist business was a blind, although paint-boxes, palettes, brushes, and all the outward signs of the painter's craft abounded. There were sketches of men without heads, of barges sailing upside down among houses, of windmills and feet. There was one canvas which was quite meaningless : it was simply a mess of dirty coloured paint mixed with blotches of bright red. But a sharp eye could detect under it all a number of lines ruled in squares. No doubt this was a plan

for military purposes which was disguised as a work of art.

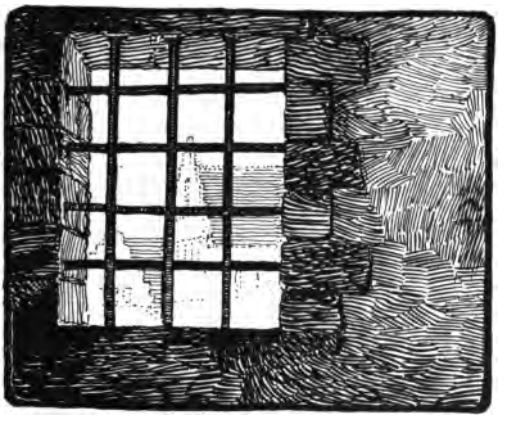
There were several sketches of Willemstad; two were especially ominous. One depicted a row of houses on the quay, but there were some lines across them converging to a point where a battery is situated. The other omitted the new iron shed by the mill, and in its place showed the grass slope of the fort beyond.

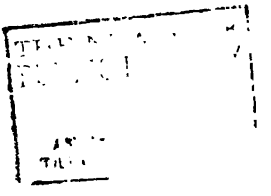
If, however, these signs of obvious cunning, should not prove to be enough in themselves to convict, what of the personal appearance of the strangers? Was there not something uncanny about their dress? It was scarcely that of workmen or bargees, yet it did not tally with the *rôle* of travellers for pleasure. To the sharp eye of the Willemstad police the stage-brigand disguise was not misleading.

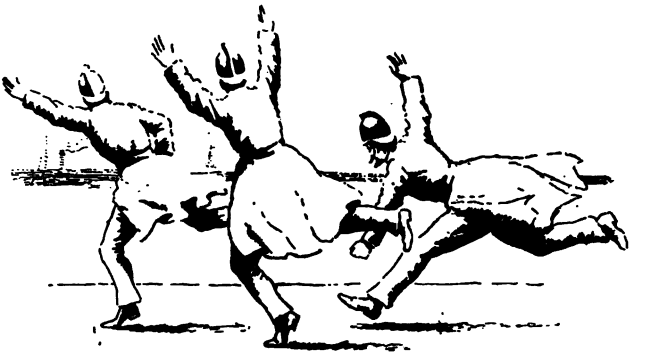
There was, in fact, no need whatever to multiply instances. That the Englishmen were spies was now almost a thing established, and the police throughout the length and breadth of Holland were on the watch.

III

THE ARREST







III

THE ARREST

It was small wonder, therefore, that the captain and crew of the *Walrus* noticed as they neared Dordrecht in the afternoon that they were the centre of considerable interest. At first they were deluded into thinking that it was their seamanlike handling of the boat in a crowded channel. But that, however brilliant, does not make policemen run along the river bank, keeping pace with the boat. After a few minutes of this, they concluded that the word "London" on their stern had attracted attention. Possibly the Customs men supposed that the *Walrus* had sailed along the river straight from England to Dordrecht and had not yet been examined.

"It must be something to do with the Customs,"

suggested the mate. "But they are obviously policemen."

"We don't look like burglars, and we are not going at a pace that endangers the river traffic. If it's anything to do with the Customs why didn't they examine us before? They must have seen us along the coast. It is hardly likely a little boat like this would come across the North Sea, and still less probable that she would be running a cargo."

When a few minutes later the captain hailed a tug and was being towed at ten knots an hour into the town, a shout went up from the police on the bank, for they realised that their prey was slipping from their clutches. The mate waved his hat and the tugman looked innocently to the opposite shore.

But the triumph was short-lived, for a little higher up the river the tug was commanded to stop in the name of the law, and the suspected craft was brought alongside the quay near the railway bridge. Here two police officers were put on board, and the *Walrus* was towed to the lower harbour, there to await the arrival of the portmaster. Meanwhile the captain strove to entertain his captors. He endeavoured to introduce the comparative mildness of the weather as a topic of conversation, but the subject somehow did not seem to work up well. He proceeded in his attempt to rouse their interest by pointing out upon a chart the course the *Walrus* had taken since morning. The effect of this was still more depressing.

THE ARREST

The two strangers looked at each other significantly. Then followed a gloomy silence.

The port-master appeared at last and intimated to the captain, but in a most courteous manner, that neither he, nor his mate, nor his boat was at liberty to proceed until certain little matters were cleared up with the police. The captain said nothing. He could not think of a suitable reply.

Then the port-master gave an order to the tug, and again the Englishmen and their attendant police officers were taken further up the river, this time to the quay by the old museum, where the police took formal possession of the boat. The "spies" were arrested and told that all the things in the cabin must be brought in the police station and examined.

In vain did the captain point out that this would take at least an hour and a half, and they might just as well be examined on board. In vain did he try to make them more reasonable by generous offers of cigars; in vain did he produce a bottle of old Schiedam, which he had in somewhat similar situations of a less serious character found to be a panacea.

It was useless. Everybody and everything connected in any way with the *Walrus* was to be arrested, and there were to be no exceptions.

By this time a crowd had collected on the quay, and they witnessed a curious procession. The captain and mate, preceded by some one in uniform,

led the way. Then marched two officers and a plain-clothes man; the rest of the pageant was formed by a rearguard of policemen, each carrying as much as possible of the miscellaneous collection of clothes, boots, cameras, bottles, and a hundred and one articles from the cabin of the *Walrus*, and each maintaining to the best of his ability the solemn dignity necessary to the occasion.

The big bell struck five as the prisoners entered the examination-room. It was then that the mate received a nudge.

"What is it?" he whispered.

"The clock is in my brown bag!" gasped the captain, his voice apparently struggling with his feelings.

"Well, it'll be all right, won't it?" said the mate reassuringly.

"But it's set to go off at a quarter past," was the quiet reply.

And then the inquiry began.

IV

THE HOUSE OF

MYNHEER TROMP

IV

THE HOUSE OF MYNHEER TROMP

THE barge *Anna Jacoba* of Rotterdam was no frail craft. Some three hundred feet she measured from stem to stern, and not less than forty lay between her iron sides. She carried, besides an enormous cargo, three complete houses. The smallest and literally the foremost of these, served as the quarters of the two hands.

Amidships was a more commodious suite of rooms which showed windows above deck, a "self-contained" flat at present doing duty as a wash-house and wet-weather drying-ground. The largest and last of these abodes presented quite a palatial appearance in the stern, showing casements picked out in white and chocolate, each with a shutter of brightest emerald, and each the proud possessor, even in winter-time, of a flower-box.

A covered promenade deck into which, judging from the presence of a cooking-range and articles pertaining thereto, a good deal of the kitchen seemed to have overflowed, formed the base of an upper storey. This carried a horizontal steering-wheel of gigantic dimensions, and was the highest point on the craft.

From this commanding position, as from a watch-tower, the master and owner of the *Anna Jacoba* could behold the entire extent of his giant barge and give orders with as much dignity and effect as a P. and O. captain. Nay, with even more, for he stood not only upon the bridge of his ship, but incidentally upon the roof of his house and with a stamp of his broad foot he could summon his wife and children to do his will. The Dutch are always at home on the water. Even ashore, little devices here and there in their houses show they are a sea-going race. Their panelled rooms continually present surprises in the shape of ingenious cup-boards such as one sees only on board ship. Even the beds are to be found in the walls—as bunks—and would escape the eye of a stranger.

In the same manner that these signs of the sea are to be found flourishing on dry land among these well-salted people, it is interesting to notice that there appear on their craft many of the luxuries which belong in other countries exclusively to the land. Gardens and farm-yards in miniature appear above deck. When a barge

arrives at its destination, as often as not no one goes ashore. There is no need, everything is on board.

It was on the break-up of the frost already recorded in this narrative, that Mynheer Tromp, the master of the *Anna Jacoba*, was once more in harness. His figure, at no time slender, became

A DUTCH SCHUIT

still more substantial in consequence of an additional encasement of cloth and fur. He gave an occasional short word of command to the man at the wheel, and endeavoured to warm himself somewhat—by means of a small furnace hidden in the bowl of a capacious pipe.

His eyes generally seemed to be fixed upon the tug which was plodding along nearly a quarter of a mile ahead with his own craft in tow, but

occasionally he glanced astern to notice with some satisfaction the rapid progress he was making.

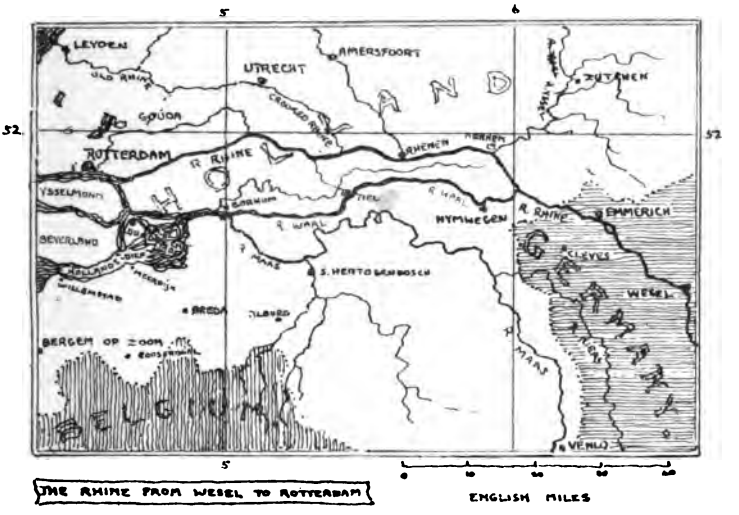
As far as his eye could see, the Rhine, now nearly free of floating ice, was crowded with vessels. Trains of barges, under tow of tugs great and small, forced their way up stream as if they were contending in a race. Along the shore on either side, where the force of the river was comparatively slight, a few *schuits* were taking advantage of a following wind, and making slow progress in the same direction.

Far away, down river, more armies of steamers were approaching and tangled streaks of smoke, confusing the line of the horizon towards the west, showed where fresh hosts from Rotterdam were on the move.

Many of the barges now being left behind by Mynheer Tromp had started hours before, for they were trains of three, four, and six together, while the *Anna Jacoba* had a tug to herself. Consequently she would be able to reach Westphalia at least a day before her rivals. This meant money in the pocket of the master of the fortunate craft, for the coal strike in the Ruhr valley had made his cargo a precious one.

Thus, as he overtook train after train during the day—an inward sense of satisfaction stole over him, it compensated somewhat for the wretchedness of his climatic surroundings, which were indeed depressing. A dreary leaden-coloured sky gave no

indication of breaking. The water was a monotonous grey, except in irregular patches where it was darkened by gusts of wind. The shores, not uninteresting at any other time, with their glimpses of farmsteads and avenues of pollard trees, were now reduced to a cheerless monochrome. The rain



THE RHINE FROM WESEL TO ROTTERDAM

falling steadily the while was as unpleasing to the body as the landscape to the eye.

It was near evening when the old-world town of Gorkum disappeared astern and Mynheer Tromp began to think of his supper. He knew that his tug would find an anchorage early on so thick a night as this, and was in the act of making a mental calculation as to where they would be when darkness

fell, when he observed a small brown sail in the middle of their course ahead.

It was especially brought to his notice because the tug was passing it so close that there was some danger of running it down. He altered his course in order to give the little boat a wider berth, and observed then that her dangerous proximity was no accident. Indeed some kind of altercation was going on between the solitary occupant of the smaller craft, which looked uncommonly like a police boat, and the men on the tug. There was a great deal of shouting and waving of arms and pointing to the *Anna Jacoba*. There could not have been more excitement if the police had been trying to hold up the tug for smuggling, and what in the world was the matter Mynheer Tromp could not divine.

Then the tug's hooter sounded, and as there were no craft ahead, he knew that this was meant to attract his attention.

Meanwhile, the boat was dropping down nearer and nearer, and by the extraordinary signs of the occupant it was evident that he wished to be taken in tow. Mynheer Tromp noticed with some surprise that the police officer when he came alongside, made fast to the barge in a manner of his own and not at all in accordance with local usage.

It is a dangerous feat at any time to get a small boat safely alongside a vessel going very much faster, and the visitor seemed to experience diffi-

culty as he was single-handed. He succeeded nevertheless, with a good deal of straining of ropes, and bumping, secured his craft to the barge amidships, and jumped on board. Then unfastening the rope again walked aft letting his boat slide astern until she was in tow a few feet from the rudder of the *Anna Jacoba.*

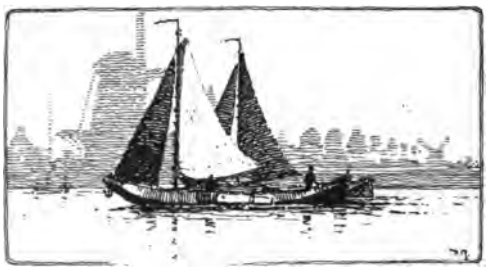
Mynheer watched these movements stolidly, neither opposing nor encouraging them. He had nothing to fear from the river police, in fact he knew most of them by sight, but what this man wanted he could not divine. Had he been merely wishing to pick up a tow he would have hung on behind without further explanation.

On account of the failing light the worthy Dutch skipper had not observed the name *Walrus, London,* painted upon the boat in tow. He was consequently greatly surprised when his visitor, whom he had never suspected was other than a member of the river police, began to address him in a foreign language.

The stranger although apparently totally ignorant of Dutch, made clear three things, that he had come from London, that he wanted to be towed up the Rhine as far as Duisburg—the destination of the barge—and that he had bargained with the tug for five gulden. Then he shouted out something which the Dutchman believed was meant for "good night," and disappeared into a space a few feet square to spend the night.

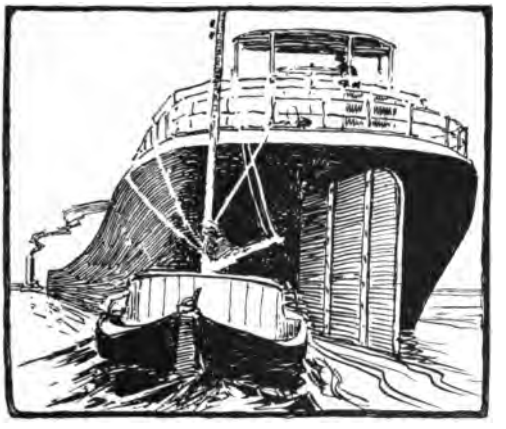
Mynheer looked steadfastly at the new craft for

some minutes after the tug had dropped anchor, and, as the darkness deepened, he could observe the light from the tiny port-holes on each side of the boat gleaming upon the surface of the rushing water. He pondered on the strangeness of foreigners in general, and wondered at an Englishman's idea of pleasure. Then he went below into his spacious apartments to sit down to a comfortable supper, and to give his wife an account of their eccentric or demented visitant.



V

IN THE WAKE OF THE



ANNA JACOBA

V

IN THE WAKE OF THE *ANNA JACOBA*

WHEN some ten days after the dramatic detention of the *Walrus* by the police, the captain was seen to sail from Dordrecht alone, it was not because the mate was chained in a dungeon cell to expiate his crimes as a plotter against the peace of Holland, but because he had only just recovered from a touch of influenza. It was a reason less romantic, it is true, but, so far as it bore upon the next fortnight's camping out, equally relentless.

The innocent intentions of the Englishmen and their craft were amply demonstrated at the police investigation. It was evident from his manner that the official who conducted it was secretly rather amused at the whole thing, but as he had received his orders from the Government he was bound to hide from his subordinates any trace of levity. The

photographs were scrutinised first, then the log book, which came in for most of the attention. It was in reality a publisher's dummy containing a few pages of printed illustrations, and the rest blank paper. The dark blue cover, on which gold letters tried to make out that it was a copy of the Ingoldsby Legends, gave the whole thing a suspicious tone, for it contained besides two or three sketch maps, a telegraphic code, and much close writing in pencil.

A smile played across the face of the examiner as he read the following entry :

"WILLEMSTAD : *Jan.* 18, '05. 9 A.M.

"Received visit from policeman. It appeared that he wanted to see the contents of the boat and ascertain what our occupation could be. The mate showed him round and produced all the most unfinished and inexplicable sketches on which he could lay hands. These seemed to excite the visitor and spur him on to renewed efforts in ransacking everything. A bottle of old Schiedam, however, produced marvellous effects, inasmuch as it made the search less exhaustive, and the visit more social. He went away apparently satisfied."

The alarum for some unexplained reason did not give a sound at the appointed time, but when the inquiry was over and the Englishmen were told that all suspicion on the part of the police had melted away, and that the *Walrus*, her master and

men alike, were free again, it went off with great effect, as if by way of applause. The chief smiled again, and gave orders that the spoils should be taken back to the boat, while the late prisoners established most friendly relations with the officers. On such good terms were they, in fact, that the captain, as he left, chided them with keeping so slack an observation of his movements when under arrest, that he had been able to set his clock unobserved. What if it had been a bomb!

Gorkum is the highest point on the Rhine at which the tide is felt. From there up to the region around Nürnburg, some 1500 feet above sea level, would be a continual ascent against fierce currents. The captain knew that he could not succeed in covering the distance under sail without almost unlimited time, for only in the event of half a gale blowing up stream was progress possible. He therefore looked out for a tow. There were innumerable trains of barges passing up river, some longer and consequently slower than others, all heavily laden.

He hung about in the middle of the river watching opportunities, and twice failing to get alongside when preliminary negotiations had been shouted on both sides.

Finally, he observed a tug with one barge, half as fast again as anything in sight. He lost no time in getting across her path, and ended by falling in with Mynheer Tromp as above recorded.

When morning dawned the Englishman took a look at his new surroundings. Judging from the rate the *Walrus* was tearing through the water it was evident that the tug was going ahead. The low shores on either bank looked very cheerless, and here and there a barn or hay-stack relieved the monotory, but under a grey sky nothing looked interesting enough to necessitate the captain staying "on deck" in a cold wet wind for more than a minute or two. He turned in for a few hours more sleep: then spun out the long morning in preparing a somewhat luxurious breakfast, tidying the boat and putting on dinner.

It would be three days at least before the barge would reach her destination, and it looked as if the solitary traveller would have a very slow time indeed. An occasional constitutional on the barge in spite of the weather made it more possible to view the surrounding country and the prospect ahead. The tug plodded along by Bommel and Tiel, through waters teeming with heavily laden *schuits* making their way down river under sail.

Nymegen, with its wooded hill and steep streets formed a pleasing contrast to the neighbouring flatness as it came into sight through films of fine rain.

Herr Tromp was at first rather gruff in his demeanour to the Englishman, but a bottle of Schiedam being produced by the latter seemed to help matters forward greatly, and before the day had passed, relations were so friendly that the

Dutchman had accepted an invitation to inspect the *Walrus*.

He turned up at supper time when the tug had anchored for the night, and the day's work was over. The meal was a success, because a supply of milk, bought by the captain from one of the provision boats that came alongside during the day, had made pancakes possible, and in these it was the captain's idea that he excelled. The larder of the *Walrus* had risen gallantly to the occasion, having been replenished that day. The captain felt that his culinary reputation was to be put to the test, and therefore was at extra pains to supply the best cuisine within his power.

The Dutchman's wife must have wondered what was keeping her lord and master so long away, for the possibility of the stranger entertaining visitors to a meal never occurred to her.

After supper Mynheer Tromp produced his huge pipe and filling it from a spacious pouch, offered the latter to the Englishman with as much solemnity as any of our great-grandfathers could have shown when proffering that mark of honour and esteem, the snuff-box. The captain felt that should he venture to try the Dutchman's strong tobacco, the effects, if not actually disastrous, would be at least unpleasant from his point of view, so he politely refused the offer, trying to avoid the least possible offence to the donor. Upon this, the other evidently thinking that the pipe was too plebeian

for this distinguished stranger, dived his hand into one of his immense pockets and produced a leather case which contained several huge black cigars, doubtless kept for special occasions, and handed this to the Englishman. The latter now felt in duty bound to take one. He did so and lit it, before he had got half through it he devoutly wished he had not ventured on the smoke, but he kept manfully at his task.

Before the Dutchman left the *Walrus* to return to the bosom of his family, he had invited his brother captain to breakfast the next morning, which invitation the latter accepted, and wishing his visitor "good night" (one of the few Dutch phrases he knew), escorted him to his own craft, then going back turned in for the night.

On the morrow the captain of the *Walrus* was early astir, and washed up the supper things and tidied the cabin generally, previous to his boarding the *Anna Jacoba*, in response to the Dutchman's overnight invitation to breakfast.

When the Englishman climbed on board the barge he found his host standing on the roof of his house smoking his morning pipe. He was evidently waiting for the Englishman, for, after bidding him a courteous "good morning," he led the way below.

His visitor was struck with the luxurious nature of his surroundings. There was a suite of panelled rooms, and through an open door he could see a companion ladder leading to a lower storey.

THE CAPTAIN OF
THE *WALRUS* ENTERTAINS

Breakfast was already laid, not in the usual way of a bargee's breakfast, but with some degree of taste which betokened a woman's hand. Indeed the whole room bore evidence of this. The table linen was spotlessly clean, and the silver shone in the morning sun which flooded the cabin from one of the green-shuttered windows.

The Englishman was introduced to Frau Tromp, who was a German, and the two girl Tromps, aged eighteen and thirteen respectively, who were evidently dressed for the occasion, and looked very neat and demure.

Although the conversation was rather limited the meal passed off pleasantly, during the progress of which the master of the *Walrus* discovered by Frau Tromp's one English sentence, "I have been in England, Peckham Rye," that he had a bond of sympathy with her here, for he too had been to this historic place, where it appeared she had once visited in the days of her girlhood. She seemed very surprised that she had not met the Englishman there!

After breakfast was over, swing doors were opened and another room was disclosed. This was doubtless the drawing-room of the *Anna Jacoba*, for the furniture was better; it boasted of a bookcase, and much to the Englishman's surprise, a piano, upon which the eldest daughter performed very creditably.

What a contrast to life on an English barge!

For three days the *Walrus* was in charge of the

Anna Jacoba, but when she reached a point a few miles above Duisburg, the captain was thrown again upon his own resources. He regretfully said farewell to the good-natured skipper and his family, and cast off the barge's tow-rope. There was little wind, and, as it was late in the afternoon, the *Walrus* was compelled to put into Rheinhausen, a desolate spot indeed. The only shelter seemed to be under the quay of an iron foundry and here the Englishman moored for the night.

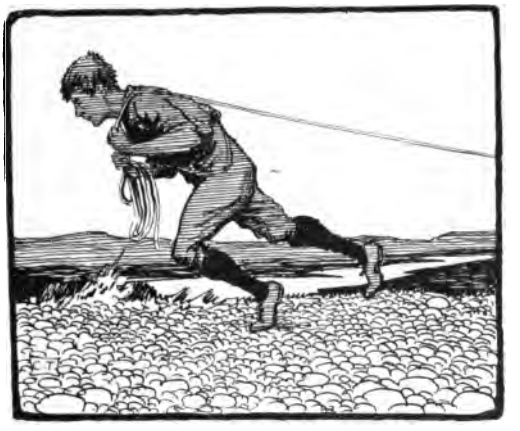
He ascended by means of an iron ladder not at all easy to climb in the dark, and found himself in the midst of a strange scene. Trucks were running to and fro automatically tipping their contents with tremendous noise into fiery gulfs below. Crowds of half-naked men moved hither and thither in the light of arc lamps and fitful flames, but no one took the slightest notice of the captain, and he was allowed to roam about unchallenged where he would. After some wandering he found a way across a tract of waste land, succeeding at last in finding a small branch post office. It was his first opportunity of communicating with the mate. He sent off a wire to give news of his movements and to inquire how the invalid was progressing. In less than two hours, during which he roamed amidst scenes of Dantesque horror in the region of the foundry, an answer had come. The mate was much better, and would be able to leave Dordrecht, and join the *Walrus* before the week was out.

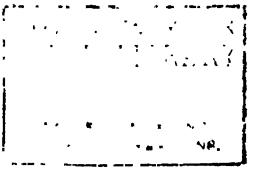
Thus doubly relieved that the mate was getting over his ailment so quickly, and that there would very soon be no further necessity to navigate alone, he betook himself back to the boat, had supper and turned in.

He tried to sleep but with only partial success. All through the night the works seemed to be in full swing. He was awakened by some more extraordinary sound than usual about two in the morning. He peered out of a port-hole. A thick mist had formed by this time, and the inferno around had become still more weird and wonderful. Great galleries of steel work occasionally lit up by sudden lurid flare showed gaunt patterns against the sky, and gruesome, melancholy clanging noises, as of iron doors shutting down lost souls to eternal doom, rang out fitfully on the still night air.

VI

THE TASK OF SISYPHUS





VI

THE TASK OF SISYPHUS

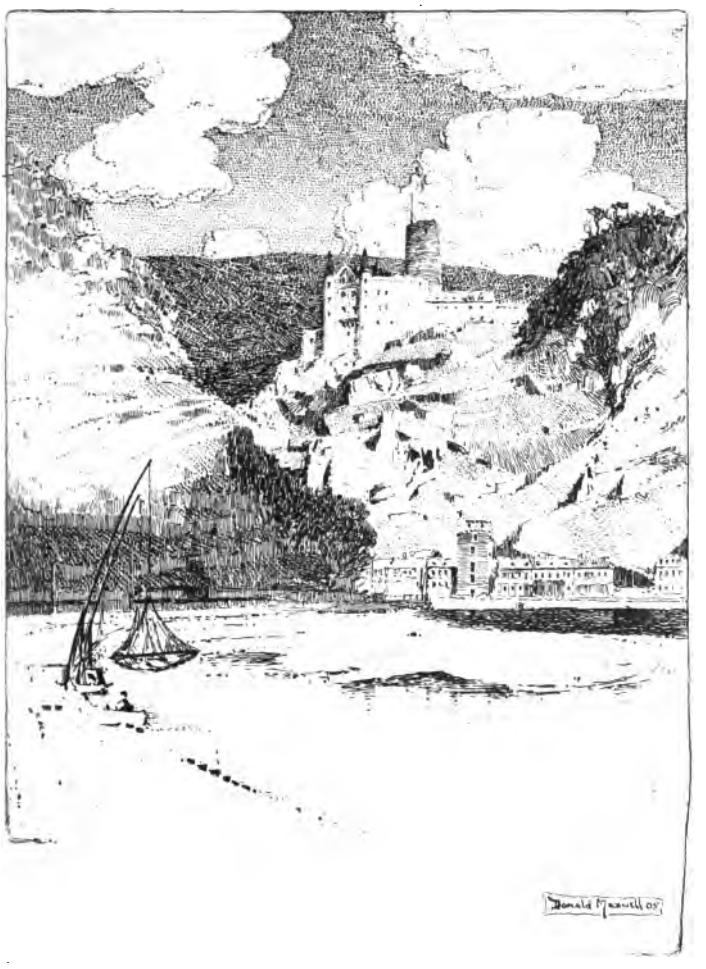
By one means and another the *Walrus* worked her way up the river into the well-known district of the Rhine gorge. It was indeed refreshing to see this in its winter aspect, with here and there a patch of snow upon the higher rocks and hills, and apparently unconscious that it was ever regarded as a show place.

The Rhine district, in spite of acres of modern hotels and promenades, is not so spoilt as is generally supposed. The river itself is in many places quite impossible in the season, but it is not difficult even then to find in one of the numerous side valleys just off the beaten track a quiet district of the old-world Rhineland. There are still villages almost untouched since the Middle Ages, and old towns in whose narrow and tortuous

streets one would take it quite as a matter of course to meet the Pied Piper or the wicked Bishop Hatto.

Not the least of the advantages to be gained by "doing" the Rhine in the winter is the comparative absence of the picture post-card fiend. The craze for sending off picture post-cards from scenes visited is getting quite obtrusive in England, but the idea came from Germany, where it has for a long time developed into proportions stupendous to contemplate. Go where you will, to ruined castle, to woodland glade, to mountain solitude, there you will come upon people often alone, apparently sketching or sitting in meditation, but in reality scribbling the inevitable post-card. On the top of any hill clusters of people are purchasing packs of cards from automatic machines and, unheedful of the glorious expanse of country at their feet, directing ghastly caricatures of the views with *Greetings from the top of the Blankberg* to their less fortunate friends. They scribble furiously and in silence, often using each other's backs for writing-desks, and everybody in the party (although totally unknown to the addressee) joins in each "greeting" and appends his name. Thus a pleasant hour, signing names and sticking stamps —work usually done in the office—fills up the time until the descent.

The *Walrus*, during her ascent of the river, was in luck with the weather. Sunshine and shadow



OBERHAUSEN AND KATZ

chased each other across orchards and brown vineyards, and quartered the landscape gaily.

St. Goarhausen, crowned with its venerable castle, was thrown into bold relief against a dark upland as the boat turned the corner up river and Oberwesel,

RHINELAND TYPES

ancient Pfalz, and the towered town of Bacharach looked more than usually quaint in their winter setting.

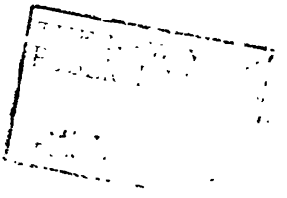
At Bingen the mate turned up again, and brought luck with him too, for on the very next day a strong

wind blew up river, and took the *Walrus* to Mainz, where she left the Rhine and began the difficult task of ascending the Main. The wind had dropped to a dead calm, and the mate who was towing, was dragged backwards with a jerk as the boat entered the racing current. Then he let the boat slip a few feet and, leaning forward at an angle so extraordinary that he was able to use his hands to steady himself on the ground, he kept his footing, and inch by inch moved along the tow-path. After about twenty minutes of this sort of thing nearly two hundred feet had been gained, and dropping anchor for a moment, the captain changed places with him and took a turn, using a similar method of progression. Thus by one means or another, including poling and hauling on the anchor, the little village of Kostheim was reached and nearly a two hundred and eighteenth part of the distance up river to Bamberg had been accomplished!

"At the present rate," groaned the mate, as the two men sat down at the waterside, "we shall reach the Ludwig's Canal in about eleven weeks!"

It was hardly surprising therefore that at six next morning the *Walrus* was flying the local signal for a tow. She succeeded in chartering a tug which took her through six locks to Frankfurt by sunset. It is there that the *Kette* boat, a hideous towing steamer not unlike a ferry, begins her journey, pulling herself up on a chain to Kitzingen, thus making the ascent of this part of the river more tolerable.

A CORNER IN
FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN



The Englishmen had some days to wait before the lengthy procession of barges started on their slow and difficult journey, but a little delay was no hardship in a city so interesting and venerable as Frankfurt.

When finally the fleet started, the *Walrus* was made fast to the steamer. The persistent clanking of the chain as it ran over the iron deck was exceedingly depressing. For the first two days, the weather being uncompromisingly wet, time hung rather heavily on the hands of the boxed-up travellers, although the captain tried to relieve the monotony by conversing in his three or four words of German with numerous heads appearing from port-holes in the stokehole of the *Kette* boat close alongside, and even supplying one with a glass of Schiedam to the intense envy of other heads adjacent.

But by the third day the ear had grown accustomed to the incessant noise, which in time became hardly noticeable. The sun showed itself again about noon, and the winter landscape was delightful and impressive as the boat passed slowly between the wooded heights of the great forest district of Germany. On both sides of the river hill succeeded hill, brown and purple and darkest green, relieved here and there by a red porphyry crag, the white walls of a village, or the grey towers of some ancient stronghold.

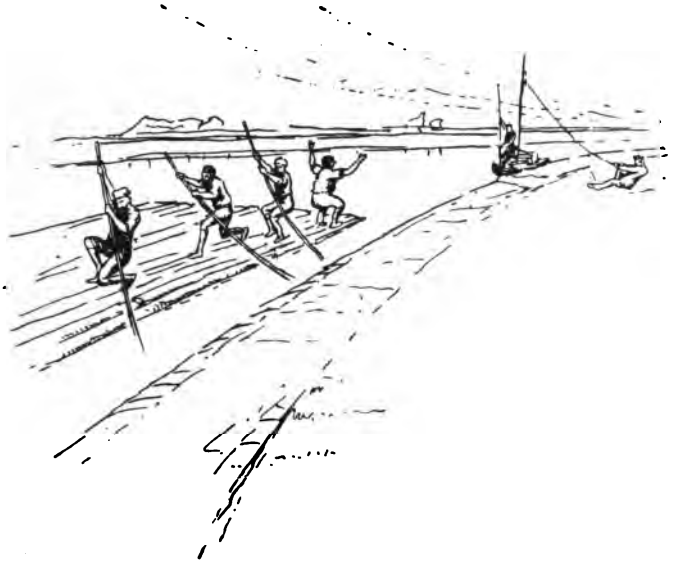
By the time Würzburg had come into sight, twenty-four hours later, half a gale was blowing.

The *Walrus* then left the *Kette* boat, and under reefed sail ploughed along against the rushing stream, through the mediæval city with its massive old bridge, on which stand figures of the saints; and, after passing the lock just above it, out into the country beyond until darkness fell. Up again at 5.30. All hands had breakfast, and pushed on, now again by means of towing, for the wind had dropped. The work was rendered more than usually difficult on account of the high water. At places the bank was flooded, and the unfortunate man who was on ahead had to pick his way from point to point in a swamp, sometimes being compelled to go so far inland that he was pulling almost at a right angle to the boat. When it became clearly an impossible task to make progress under these conditions a halt was called and an expedition formed to a village in sight, where more rope was obtained. About three hundred feet was now in use.

Hour after hour toiled the captain and mate alternately, but the rate of progress was something like half a mile an hour and less. Each gap was a problem, and caused delay. As the day wore on the obstacles to navigation increased. An hour's patient work was lost in avoiding a raft which threatened to crush the boat against the bank, and in continuation of similar dangers, for these came thick and fast, it became necessary to cross the stream, and thus the fruits of another hour's work were lost.

WÜRZBURG

At last, as the two wretched navigators became more and more exhausted, the losses at every stop became greater than the gains between. The boat pulled furiously against them, meeting the wind



OBSTACLES TO NAVIGATION INCREASED

blowing across the fields and swampy ground. It was the last straw when the captain, towing with a line some hundreds of feet in length, the end of which he had wrapped round his body, in a wild and desperate endeavour to hold his footing began to be dragged slowly feet foremost in a sitting posture toward the rushing river.

" Anchor ! " he yelled to the mate, and the down-

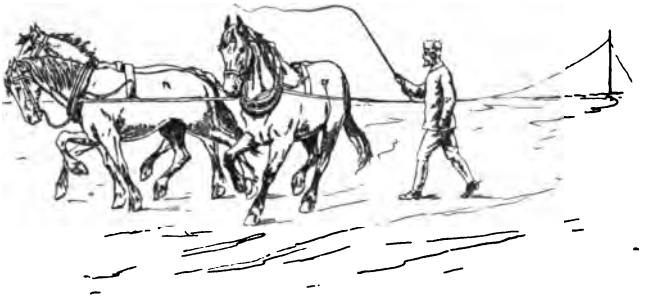
ward flight of the *Walrus* was stopped before the unfortunate captain had arrived at the water-side.

"It is impossible. We must wait for the *Kette* boat. You need to be a Hercules and a Sisyphus combined to attempt getting up the Main," he added gloomily, as some of the solid mud was scraped from his garments by the mate.

VII

THREE HORSES AND

A BARGE



VII

THREE HORSES AND A BARGE

It was two days before the chain steamer passed on its way to Kitzingen ; but there is compensation in all things, and so it proved here, for the travellers discovered Eibelstadt, a most fascinating village, apparently little altered since the Middle Ages.

It is surrounded by a wall with towers, and its irregular and often narrow streets are filled with quaint village architecture and rich in primitive religious symbolism. On almost every house is a figure of Christ or of some saint, or a representation of the Holy Family or of the Madonna and Child ; and before each a little lamp is fixed.

There are four gates at the four sides of the town, and under the arch of every one there hangs a crucifix, and in two cases a crude but interesting painting on the wall.

But the most extraordinary feature of all is a cross on which are nailed hands and feet of Our Lord (but no body), and various tokens of the Crucifixion. There are a ladder, pincers, flail (hammer ?), two cups, a scourge, a mallet, and a spear ; besides other things, the meaning of which is difficult to make out. On top of the cross is a cock crowing, and underneath on a tablet is written *Es ist volbrakht.*

When at length the *Walrus* reached Kitzingen (the journey taking all day instead of four hours, on account of the *Kette* boat getting mixed up with a down-coming raft), it was to find the river seven feet above the usual level, and the chance of successful towing by any numbers, or by any means, a desperately small one. But by a piece of remarkably good fortune, for there is at this time of the year practically no navigation above the course of the chain steamer, it happened that a craft towed by three horses was endeavouring to reach Bamberg.

The captain arranged for a tow all the way, and he was informed that it would take four days unless the continually rising river made progress impossible. The barge was about the size of those so familiar on the Thames, and she had a tow-line of wire, quite half a kilometre in length, made fast to the top of her mast. On account of its height this cleared all obstacles near the waterside, and enabled the horses to find a path on firm ground far from the swampy banks of the river. It would have been impossible to tow the *Walrus* from across so much

swampy land, because her small mast would have allowed the rope to sag and thus catch against stones and bushes.

But in spite of all devices the barge ran aground at a bend of the stream almost within sight of the spires of Bamberg, and the boat in tow, when her crew perceived that the delay would be a long one, cast loose and proceeded alone. The mate climbed the mast and made fast the tow-line to the top. Then taking the whole length available he ran forward and wound the other end round the stump of a tree. The captain, who was in the boat, put the helm hard over and swung the *Walrus* into the stream.

" Right away ! " he shouted, and the mate began to stagger forward three hundred feet ahead. The work was so hard that a change was made every half-kilometre.

For a time they managed to make some considerable headway, for the river had swollen to such an extent that they were able from firm ground to tow the boat over what was usually swampy land. But the last mile before entering the Regnitz was a struggle which lasted for hours, and which will ever be engraven on their memories. They tried alternate towing; they tried tying the helm and both towing; they tried punting; in fact they tried every means known of getting a boat up stream, and finally succeeded in reaching the first lock. In another hour the inhabitants of the ancient city

of Bamberg beheld an extraordinary boat of Dutch construction with all her tackle down, being navigated by two figures still more extraordinary. They were covered with mud, wet almost from head to foot, and appeared generally as if they had just come off a battlefield.

The boat was moored, and they staggered into a *café :*

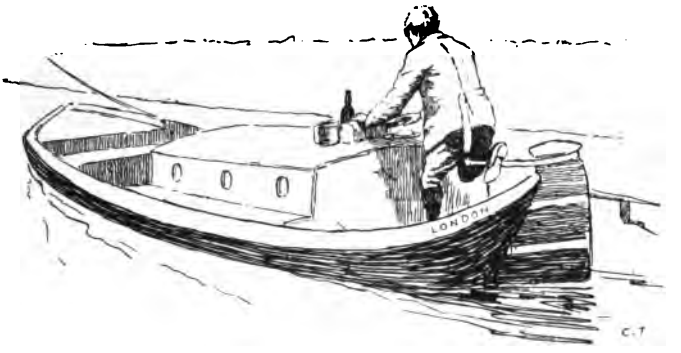
"My highest ideal," remarked one, "is to sit down."

"And mine—" began the other; but he just then caught the waiter's eye and said, "Zwei Bier."

No further conversation ensued, and the ideal of the second speaker is still shrouded in mystery.

VIII

NAUTICAL MOUNTAINEERING



VIII

NAUTICAL MOUNTAINEERING

BAMBERG is of venerable appearance: a city of churches rich with variety of sculpture, of ancient palaces and time-worn statuary, of busy squares and quaint, irregular streets. The river Regnitz divides and finds its way through the town in various branches. The principal stream glides swiftly under the massive stone arch in the shadow of the Rathhaus, and then broadens out where an array of old houses with galleries forms the quarter known as Little Venice. Multitudinous lesser streams with foaming waters dive suddenly under buildings, and appear again in unexpected places to drive roaring mills or tumble noisily over decrepit weirs.

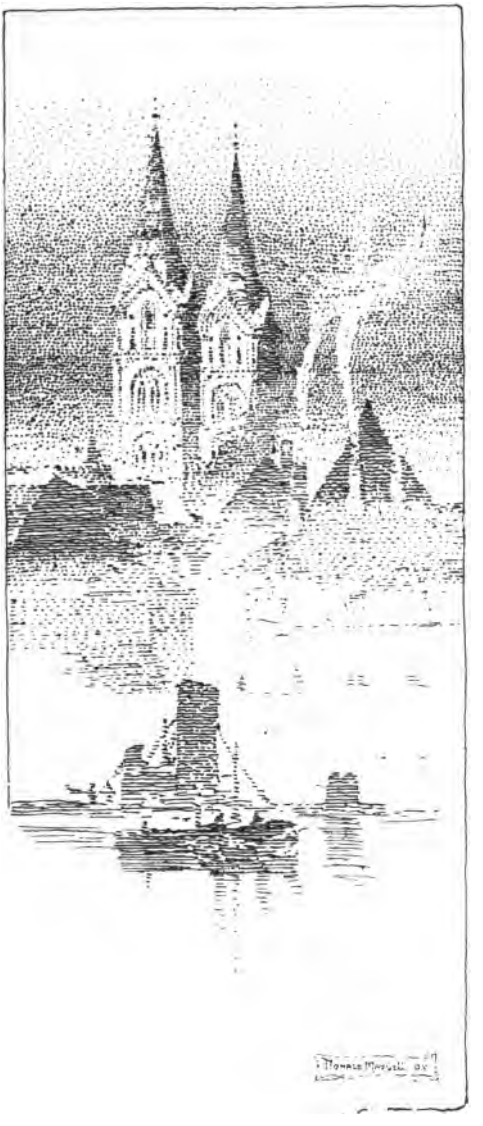
Nearly every open space is bright with groups of orange-sellers or the stalls of the vendors of fruit

and bread; and amidst the medley of ancient and modern there rises the great cathedral, with its four magnificently proportioned towers. Perhaps there is no finer example of Romanesque architecture in all Germany, and hardly in Europe. It is perfect alike in detail and in mass.

The interior is impressive as a building, but as a church it is made still more so by the dignity of the worship within its walls. It was the second Sunday in Lent when the *Walrus* was in Bamberg, and on that day it was difficult to find even standing room at the High Celebration. Both ends of the church have choir stalls and an altar, and had there been no one there it would have been difficult at first glance to tell which way to face, because Continental churches are not always built east and west.

While High Mass was being celebrated at the high altar, people were receiving the Sacrament at a small altar in the body of the church in front of the raised chancel. The choir, perfectly trained, sang Palestrina or music of the Palestrina type, and the old walls, from which looked down effigies of long-departed Bambergers, rang once again with "Gloria" and "Sanctus" and echoed solemnly the responses of the kneeling multitude.

It was at Bamberg that the *Walrus* entered upon a new phase in her existence. Brought up in salt water and nurtured amongst surf and sand-banks on the coast of the North Sea, she had already passed through strange waters. From the sleepy



BAMBERG

broads of Holland, she had been towed through vine-clad gorges and forest gloom—she fought with rivers and battled with floods, until she had climbed a thousand feet or more. Now she was to forget still more her native element and become a mountaineer. The Danube had to be reached, and between the Danube and the *Walrus* rose the Frankischer Jura Mountains.

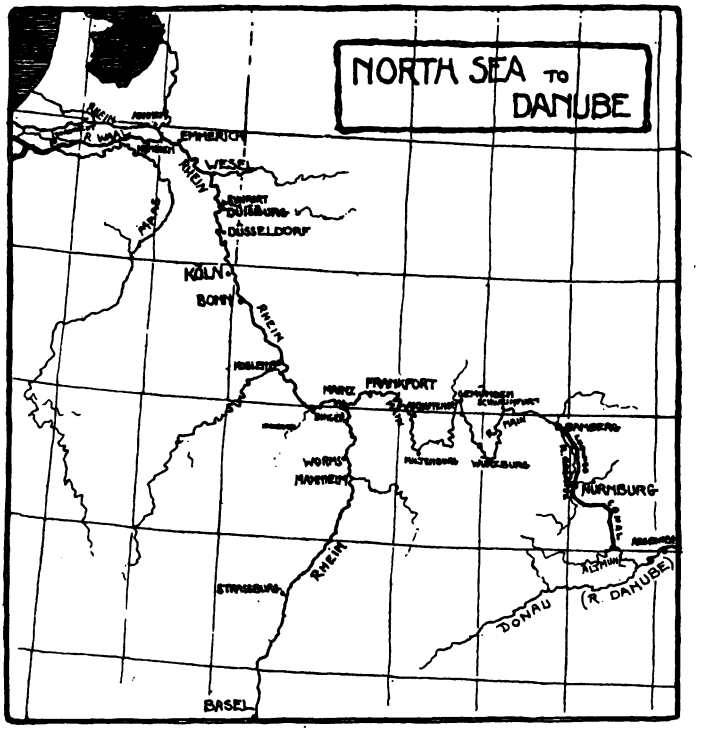
The connecting link was the Ludwig's Canal. This is an old waterway begun by Charlemagne, little used, and, except locally, very little known. It is, however, interesting as it unites the Altmuhl, which falls into the Danube, with the Regnitz, which enters the Main a few miles below Bamberg. Thus the waters of the North Sea and the Black are linked together by fresh water.

Nearly a week elapsed before the *Walrus* had obtained official permission to pass through the canal, the property of the Bavarian State. She had to be carefully measured, and numerous descriptive entries were made on a paper forwarded to Nürnburg. In some places, especially where it bridges a river or ravine, the channel is only about three feet in depth. This probably accounts for the exhaustive examination which every barge undergoes before entering the first lock. In due course the permission arrived with an intimation that the waterway was now free from ice, that the new lock at Nürnburg was finished, and that the way was clear on March 21.

A GATE IN NÜRNBURG

Lock Fees

The re-opening of the canal after the winter did not cause any excitement in shipping circles. The amount of traffic can be gauged by the fact that the *Walrus* did not see ten craft in action during



the whole one hundred and seven miles of the canal, and until nearly half way through did not observe one.

The lock fees, paid in advance in a lump, amounted to the ruinous sum of six marks, which works out

to about two-thirds of a penny per lock. The lock-keepers seem to be mostly retired soldiers. The position of lock-keeper entails very little work, taking all the year round, and it is probably often a form of pension. Tips are unknown! The Englishmen considered that the nominal fee of two-thirds of a penny indicated a supplementary "Trink Geld," but after trying to give gratuities at the first two locks, and after lengthy explanations on the part of the lock-keeper, assistants, and family, that they had made a mistake, and that the receipt for the lock fees was appended to the pass, they withheld from any attempt to spoil such Arcadian simplicity.

At one place, however, they made exception, and for services of several men in removing a temporary railway bridge—incidentally stopping a factory at work—they offered compensation to the extent of sevenpence. This was regarded in all sincerity as princely generosity, and caused unbounded satisfaction to the recipients. They were no doubt legally bound to move their bridge for an occasional boat to pass: but they might have reasonably made the excuse that the men would knock off work in a few hours and kept the *Walrus* waiting. Imagine such a situation in England. Men would turn up from all parts of the factory, bringing friends and visitors. The whole crowd would hang round getting in the way under the pretence of giving assistance, and all would expect to be heavily rewarded for their services.

There are one hundred locks between Bamberg and the Danube. They are numbered from the other end, so No. 100 was the first to encounter. The *Walrus* passed through at 6 A.M., and crossed the water to the towing side. The course till lock 99 is not the canal proper, but the river Regnitz itself artificially deepened. The stream is strong, but with memories of the Main still fresh, towing became play. On the left bank is a thickly wooded walk, on the right there rise steep grass banks covered in places with trees and shrubs. Much of the scenery in the first point of the canal recalls familiar river scenery in England, and if the reader can imagine that the Wey and Arun Canal had lost itself upon a spur of the Alps, he would get some idea of its character further on.

After two miles there is a village on the right, and opposite this a weir. Above the weir and on the same side a cutting runs up to lock 99, after which there is no more current, for the waterway becomes a separate channel from the river Regnitz, which winds through the surrounding country generally within sight.

Although the blue hills appear ahead over belts of distant pine forests, there is every characteristic of lowland country. Broad fields well cultivated stretch away toward the East, and glimpses of people at work on the land, and of oxen ploughing speak of an interesting country through which to cruise.

On either bank for a long distance are planted

fruit-trees. The tow-path is well kept and easy walking. There are a good few bridges, and as often as not the tow-path ends abruptly at the bridge. In these cases the man on the bank would run up onto the bridge, coil up the rope as the boat approached, and then drop it upon the roof of the cabin as she went under. He would then get on ahead and catch it again as the helmsman threw it. There was consequently no stop at all, except for locks which occurred about every three miles. Even a dinner hour was unnecessary, for each ate his off the cabin top when he was on duty at the rudder, a touch with the foot was sufficient to hold the boat on her course.

Considering that the *Walrus* weighed over one ton and a half, the fact that two men looked forward to towing her in turn for one hundred and seven miles with pleasurable anticipation, shows how hard had been their struggle with the Main. Pleasure after all is only relative.

The two travellers found their task hard, but before sunset on the second day they were at Nürnburg, which lies early in the ascent and not forty miles from Bemberg. The ancient city, surrounded by walls with massive round towers, is rich in antiquities. There is no end to the interest one can find in exploring mediæval courtyards and mansions that have been old for centuries. The harbour in which the boat lay moored was shut every night at ten o'clock, and in case the Englishmen

should not wish to be back by then, the good harbour master taught them a trick whereby they could draw the gate bolts by means of a hidden wire. It was not until the third evening, when they had accepted an invitation to dinner, that there had been any need to practise this burglarious manœuvre. Confident of success, however, they did not return until after midnight.

They were dismayed to find two huge hounds at large within the gates. An attempt to allay the animals' suspicions by showing that they knew the wire trick was disastrous. It seemed to rouse in an instant the fiercest passions of the beasts, and the mate nearly lost part of his hand. To enter the harbour was evidently impossible, and so seemed all attempts to awaken their master.

"We won't go home till morning," sang the captain.

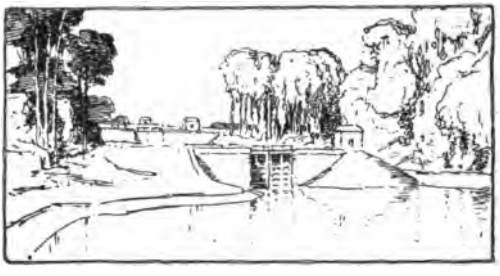
"We *can't*," growled the mate.

An uncomfortable night in a very low-class *café* ended the adventure.

Next morning before six o'clock the *Walrus* was proceeding on her journey, and the climb began in real earnest. The canal enters a region densely wooded. Locks come thick and fast, sometimes showing one over the other like steps. All day long the boat ascended into higher regions of forest and upland. Within two days lock 33, the highest point, had been passed, and it was decided to spend the night on the summit. There

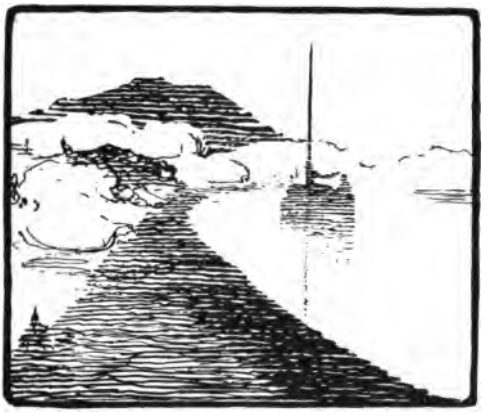
was a stretch without a lock now for some eight kilometres, and no chance remained of doing that distance before dark. The cold was intense and another mile or two would be as much as either of the mountaineers was prepared to undergo.

The man at the helm could peer down often into the recess of some wild ravine as he directed the boat across the gulf, high in air. From out dark depths beneath his feet would rise the noise of waters and the moan of the winds as they swept down the gorge. It was, indeed, a strange sensation to feel the grip of a tiller, and at the same time to have in view a roped figure picking its way along the edge of a steep descent, silhouetted darkly against the valley far below.

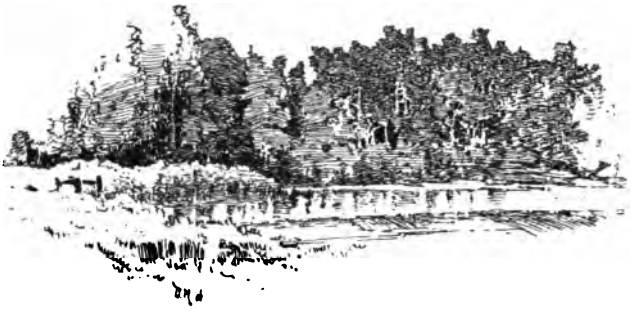


IX

A CRUISE IN



A CLOUD



IX

A CRUISE IN A CLOUD

When morning dawned the *Walrus*, like everything else around, was covered with hoar frost and enveloped in mist. The captain stamped up and down on the tow-path, endeavouring to keep himself warm, and at the same time to straighten out a frozen coil of rope preliminary to towing. The mate was even less fortunate than his companion, for he was contemplating a spell at the helm without the compensation of exercise.

Icicles hung from the roof of the cabin within, where moisture had condensed again and again, and a lump rattled in the kettle when that had been a minute on the stove.

However, there was a good day's work ahead, and it was necessary to start early in spite of the cold. For a time, as the travellers proceeded on their

journey, the one who towed and the one who steered were invisible to each other.

The exposed and elevated position of the *Walrus* accounted for the severe frost, and also for the foggy state of the atmosphere. It was one of those days when the clouds hang low in the morning, and climb the hill-side in rugged masses. The nautical mountaineers although they did not know it for some time, were in reality passing through a cloud.

The mate could see about twenty feet of the tow-rope, frosted and so hard that it remained an elongated spiral even when taking the whole weight of the boat. The rest disappeared into space ahead on the left, but judging from the rate at which the bank flew by, and by the clear ring of boots on the hard ground, the captain must have been doing record work at the invisible end.

Soon after the first change of duties the mists began to roll off and show glimpses of the tall pines along the waterside. The sun too, gave evidence of his existence in a weak and fitful way, but for a time the temperature did not improve. When at last the fog on the level of the canal had quite dispersed and allowed the warmth of the morning to be felt, the *Walrus* had reached a point where the dark pines on the left suddenly ceased, and the view opened out. Apparently the waterway at this point was skirting a lofty spur of hill, for it bore round toward the right, beneath slopes of forest,

while on the other side appeared a sudden descent, how deep at present not to be determined, for it was a white sea of rolling vapour.

A halt was called for breakfast. Food, together with sunshine, now quite powerful, made life again worth living. The usual chocolate and black bread was consumed with that relish known only to those of the strenuous out-door life. As the meal proceeded, the valley gradually appeared through rifts in the fast-dissolving cloud. Perhaps no more extraordinary view has ever been seen from the deck of a sailing boat.

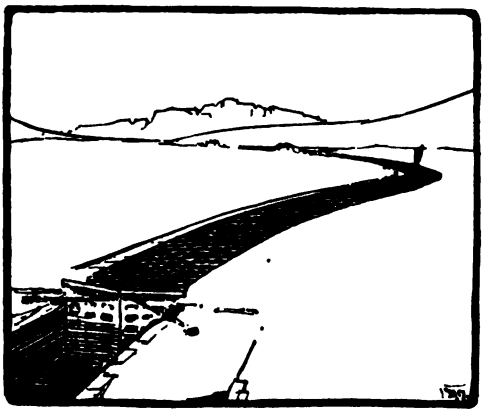
The *Walrus* might have been a balloon anchored to the mountain side, for she looked down from a giddy height above the undulating country that stretched away hundreds of feet below. Roofs of villages glittered in the distance. A stream flashed back the yellow light of the eastern sky and wandered like a fiery thread through field and forest. This was the highest point of the cruise. Hitherto it had been all up-hill work. Now it would be a steady descent to the Black Sea. There would be no more towing after Dietfurt, which is the first village on the Altmuhl, for the stream is rapid and progress would be easy in spite of thirteen locks. Once on the Danube—especially now it was likely to be in flood—a hundred miles a day would often be possible. The prospect of such travelling, after the experience of the last few weeks, put new life into the travellers.

"Pull up that lee-board," shouted the mate, who had gone ahead on the tow-path, and was preparing for work.

The word "lee-board" echoed among the hills. It sounded quite startling on this steep mountain height. Has ever so nautical a phrase been uttered among the ravines of the Frankischer Jura? Have any of those dark ghostly pines or any of their ancestors heard before such a salt-water word?

X

THE DESCENT TO



THE DANUBE

X

THE DESCENT TO THE DANUBE

BEFORE the mate had been long on his tow-path duty a following breeze sprang up, and the captain by hoisting the jib eased the boat considerably.

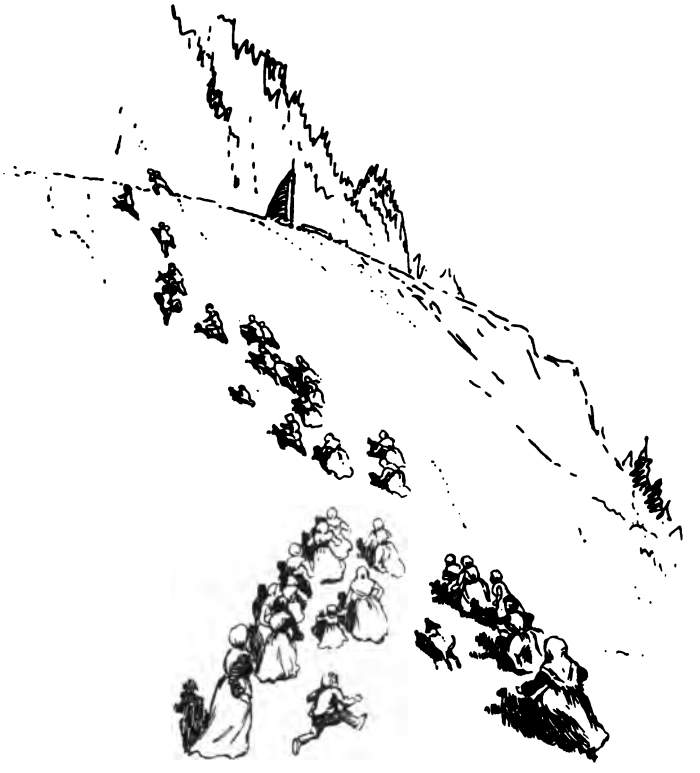
She went gaily along the height. Neither was she unnoticed. A sail up on the hill-side, where indeed a craft of any kind was a *rara avis*, was a phenomenon entirely new to the inhabitants of the villages below. The entire population of one hamlet scaled the hill to see what manner of apparition it was. The interest was exceptional because the *Walrus* was the first boat to pass in the year.

Greetings and good wishes were shouted to the man in the *Walrus*, but here as at other places the man on the tow-path was taken for a hired slave, and treated accordingly. One enterprising stranger brought sausages which he proceeded to offer for

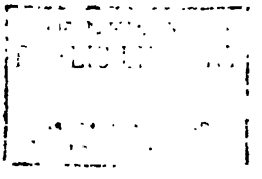
sale. Seeing that the strangers accepted his terms with alacrity, for they were running short of provisions, several enterprising youngsters offered to fetch further supplies. A halt was called, and the messengers tore headlong down the steep slope at an astonishing pace, and returned in very creditable time laden with milk and eggs, and with a loaf fit for the household of a giant.

A sudden change in the weather occurred at noon, and heavy rain, which showed no signs of diminishing, became the order of the day. The two mountaineers tramped on, towing and steering in turn, without a stop—but for locks—until four in the afternoon. Then they moored the boat, and sought the good cheer of a village *Gasthaus*. The fame of their enterprise had run before them. They were shown there a local paper which described the travellers as young Dutchmen journeying to the Holy Land. " Although of noble birth," the mate read with some inward amusement, " they are under vows to sleep at no inn, neither to eat the bread of luxury."

A chapter of accidents occurred next morning when the *Walrus* was passing through a lock. The mate had gone into the lock-keeper's house to get his signature on the pass, and the captain who had put the kettle on to boil for a second breakfast, landed and walked to and fro on the quay to keep up his circulation. He observed before long a thin column of grey vapour ascending from the depths



THE ENTIRE POPULATION
SCALED THE HILL



between the gates. He hastened to the brink and looked down to discover that the boat was on fire. Flames and smoke began to issue from the region of the "galley." He took a flying leap on to the top of the cabin, and scrambled down; when he saw that the conflagration was a serious one and not merely the effect of the stove flaring up, he gave the alarm to the mate and all around.

Apparently his voice echoed in vain between the slimy walls of the lock, for no one came in answer to his call. He seized the ship's pail, and having dipped over the side, poured its contents into the zinc-lined trough in which stood the stove, for it was in this that the fire raged. The effect at first was simply that of increased smoke and an indescribable mess, but the small pond this formed served its purpose, and everything smouldering or in flame was dipped in turn until the conflagration was entirely subdued. The cause of the accident was the ignition of some celluloid films near the stove.

Just as the victory over the flames was being won, the captain heard a loud splash, and saw the mate rise from the water about ten feet from the boat. He had evidently slipped in crossing the upper gates.

The involuntary bather looked so astonished as he appeared, that the captain, who had no anxiety for his safety, roared with laughter. The good lock-keeper, however, fearing that he would have to

report a tragedy to headquarters, and shocked at what he considered must be the captain's callousness concerning death, ran and fetched a long pole in the end of which was a formidable hook. Armed with this terrible weapon he rushed to the water's edge. When any one is unfortunate enough to fall into the water, few of the well-meaning rescuers seem to think that there is a possibility of the victim being a swimmer. Fortunately for the mate he scrambled out before the hook arrived.

A halt of half an hour was voted. While the mate did a quick change and spread his saturated garments to dry upon the roof of the cabin, the captain effaced the more obvious traces of the fire and proceeded to make large basins of chocolate and cut colossal slices from the giant loaf of black bread. This feat was quite an art in itself, and not to be learnt in a day. Usually the mate's slices were the most artistic in finish, the captain's generally having a tendency to increase and diminish in thickness without the slightest regard for any law of proportion.

For the benefit of the reader, should he find himself (it is assumed that only a member of the sterner sex would be strong enough for the task) confronted with the problem of cutting bread-and-butter from a loaf of such a size that both arms are necessary to enclose it, he might be glad of the following hints as to procedure. Lay the flattened top of the loaf (which weighs nearly seven pounds, and resembles somewhat a hugely magnified penny

bun) along the inside of the extended left arm, then hold it against the waistcoat and seize the knife in the right hand ready for the attack. The general pose is that of a violinist about to perform, the knife representing the bow and the loaf the instrument. Cut from left hand to waistcoat in moderate slices not over two inches thick. Stand in a dry place for five minutes and serve to taste—seasonable at any time.

The last two sentences are not vital to the success of the bread-and-butter, but it seems a fit and proper finish, giving a " cookery-book " tone to the directions.

Since their voyage the captain and mate have both felt that the many discoveries they made *en route* concerning cooking and kindred subjects, might be of some use to housewives. Being men of modest disposition, however, they did not on their return declare their culinary and economic triumphs to the world in general with a flourish of trumpets, and thus gain laurels for themselves. They quietly lived their lives as if nothing unusual had happened. It has been brought home to them, nevertheless, that the simple hints they could give on household management would serve to brighten many an English home, and therefore with sincere conviction that humanity in general will be benefited, they have given permission for their researches to be made public. Accordingly, these are now given to the world. In tabulated form they might be

printed on a card and hung in a prominent place in the kitchen.

Hints to Housewives.

(1) It is usually better to use warm or hot water rather than cold when washing up *greasy* plates.

[This little discovery on board the *Walrus* was the means of abolishing a discussion which occurred almost daily, viz., Did the man who washed or the man who dried, do the most towards cleaning the plates. It also saves tea-cloths.]

(2) Do not always use the best butter to fry bacon. In the long run lard will come just as cheap.

(3) *Invariably* put some water in a kettle or saucepan before placing on a fierce fire.

The descent into the valley of the Altmuhl was accomplished in very dismal weather, but in spite of this fact the country looked most interesting. The canal bore round the hill-side leaving the valley on the right until within a few miles from Dietfurt. Then it took a turn and entered a broad belt of level grass enclosed between thickly wooded hills.

It was evening and the rain clouds rolled off toward the south allowing the yellow sunlight to flood the scene. The waterway, now like a lowland river, became a deep blue belt wandering in fields of brightest green. A few more locks following each other in quick succession took the *Walrus* down into the rapidly flowing Altmuhl.

The captain gave a sigh of relief and sat down in the bow, sufficiently near a scull to reach it if necessary. The mate lighted his pipe. The boat was carried swiftly upon the bosom of the stream. Through level pastures, fragrant with the freshness of spring. The warm glory of evening lit up the meadows and flamed upon the heights that flanked the valley. The purgatorial labours of the climb faded from the memories of the travellers, for they had entered Fields Elysian.

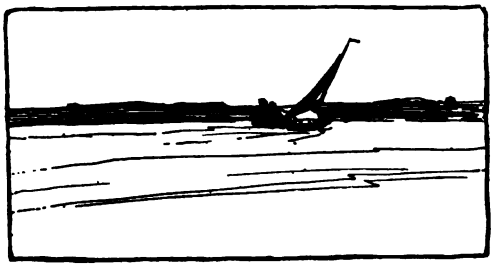
The ideal conditions of life, however, proved to be very short lived. In the morning for a few hours the journey was delightful. The *Walrus* sped along under wooded slopes studded with grey rocks, through scenes strikingly beautiful. Then a storm brewed and everything was blotted out by blinding rain and hail. For hours the conditions of things remained the same. The travellers, drenched to the skin and miserably cold, took turns at towing from the bank. Thus it was early in the afternoon that they reached Kelheim, where lies the last lock of the Altmuhl, and where that river enters the Danube.

The weather grew worse and worse and by 6 A.M. on the following day a blustering and violent gale was raging. The mate went ashore and opened the lock, and then when the *Walrus* had dropped anchor in the cut leading to the river on the other side, the two men with hands benumbed, managed somehow to raise the mast and disentangle the ropes.

They knew that it was impossible to use the mainsail in such weather. Then they lashed the jib in its place. Peering ahead out of the cut they could see a wildly surging brown torrent leaping by. This was the foe they were to encounter.

The boat was sheltered by a wall, but when she had been punted a hundred feet or so, she was caught by gale and flood at the same moment. With a lurch she lay over on her beam ends. Her mast and spars creaked and strained. She leapt forward foaming at the bow and ploughed her way into the middle of the current. Then the captain hurled himself upon the tiller, and with his back against it and his feet on the boat's side, forced her head down stream. The mate clung grimly to the sheet, at the same time adding his weight to the captain's, as wind and river hurled them down towards Ratisbon.

Thus the *Walrus* entered the Danube.



XI

THE FLOOD-GATES

OF THE HILLS

XI

THE FLOOD-GATES OF THE HILLS

TWICE the boat narrowly escaped being blown to the shore, which seemed to fly past like a train; and once she touched a snag and her rudder was unshipped. The mate seized a scull in time, however, and kept the boat's course while the captain fixed things up again. Every now and then a gust of unusual violence would wrestle with the tackle and threaten to carry it all away. It was a tough bit of work for two men to keep hold of the sheet, but they managed it somehow and everything held. "A rope ferry!" shouted the mate, who was peering ahead.

The captain said nothing, but he knew that no worse thing could be seen under present conditions. This one was not marked on the chart, and consequently he was totally unprepared. These ferries

are not encouraging things to encounter at the best of times. They consist of a punt, made fast to a small trolley which runs on a rope stretched from poles on opposite banks of the river. Above Ratisbon, where there is very little traffic, the rope is often not high enough to clear a mast. The situation was a desperate one, for it was clearly impossible to anchor; it would take some time to drop the mast. Already the ferry was alarmingly near.

"We're done if we can't get it down in a few seconds," the captain remarked grimly when he had gauged the height of the rope. The wind was so gusty that it was risky to leave the sail for a moment; but in this case it had to be done, and the two men rushed forward simultaneously. Kicking out the bolt, they literally tore down the mast, which fell with a crash upon the top of the cabin, the sail flapping wildly in confusion. It was not a moment too soon, however. Before they had recovered from the effort, the boat had been carried under the ferry rope, which was now fast being left behind.

The tackle was in such a tangle that it was impossible to get up sail again at once, and the wind was blowing the *Walrus*, now helpless, on to a lee shore. The only way to get out of immediate danger was to anchor in a backwash. After a spell of frantic rowing the boat was pulled out of the main stream under the shelter of a steep bank, and anchor was dropped.

This was enough work to justify a rest, and although very little had been accomplished in distance, the travellers felt that they had earned a day off.

"I see," said the captain, who had been consulting a map, "that a perfect fiend, an old stone bridge, is charted at Ratisbon. I think we will go and have a look at it from dry land first. With a river running like this it would be suicide to go near it by water."

The mate agreed to the proposal.

Accordingly they trudged over the hills to Ratisbon. When they reached the river, below the bridge they beheld a mass of racing waters, white with foam and flying spray. The narrow arches of the old stone bridge were nearly half their normal height, so great was the rushing stream, and a foaming wave was piled up against each pier. The roar was incessant.

"It's a beast!" shouted the captain.

At any other time he would have raved over its picturesque proportions and hurled anathemas at any one who would propose to pull it down and build another.

"It's impossible," shouted the mate in reply; and the two retired to a *café* to hold a council of war, the upshot of which was that a day should be allowed to elapse. There was plenty to see. Another council was fixed for the following afternoon.

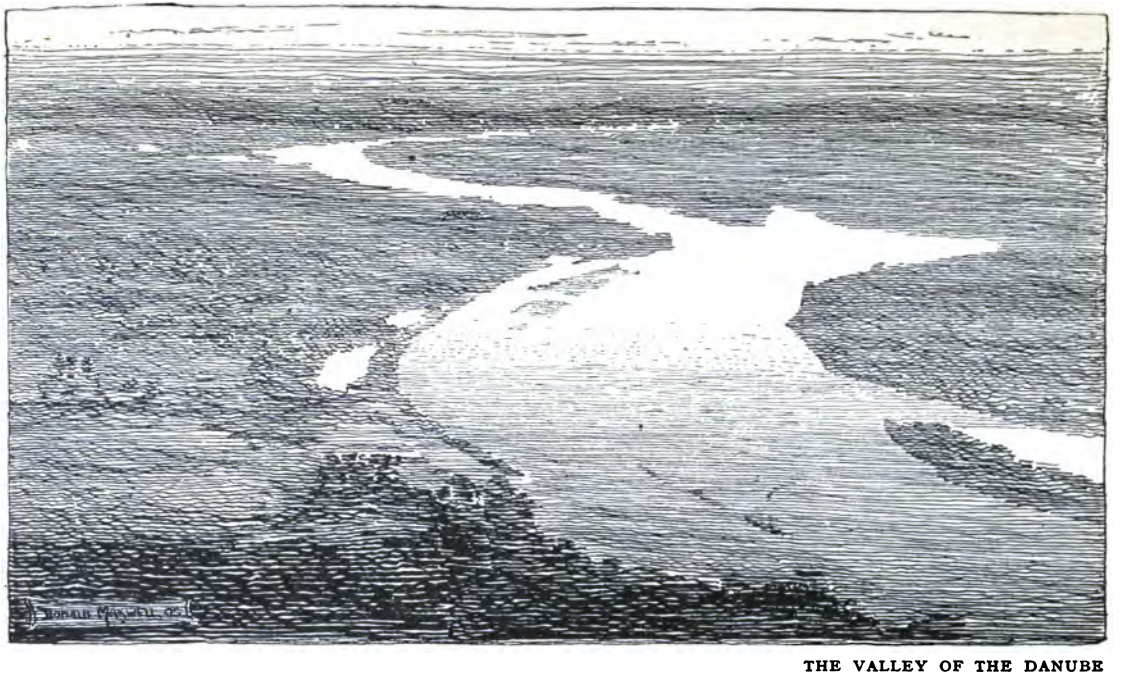
The river divides above the town and the road

crosses both branches. The left branch was not running at anything like the pace of the other, and it looked quite possible to get the boat through on that side. But it was obvious there must be a reason for this slackening of the current, and this reason was evidently a weir. The mate followed up the stream and reported that there was a six-foot drop. After several sub-committees had been held in various *cafés*, the second council met as appointed, and it was decided unanimously to try and shoot the rapids on the following day.

When morning came it brought fine weather and no wind, so that the conditions were most favourable. The mast and all the tackle were lashed down, and the rudder was unshipped and made fast on top of the cabin. As soon as the *Walrus* had been brought to the bank, a hundred feet or so above the weir, the mate jumped ashore and held her up with a long painter. She pulled more and more as she backed towards the fall, and when he had checked her enough to give her considerable way he sprang on to the bow. The captain stood at her stern with boat-hook and the mate steadied her with a scull.

Down she went, in fine style, with increasing velocity, until she simply leapt from wave to wave. Then, rowed against the stream to keep steering way, she shot under the bridge half a mile below, and the dangers of Ratisbon were a thing of the past.

The progress of the *Walrus* during the next few



THE VALLEY OF THE DANUBE
ABOVE VIENNA

days was considerable, for the ropes of the ferries were higher and there were no bridges which involved shipping the mast. It rained steadily and it was scarcely enjoyable. The river was rising every day, and it was already a torrent. In the flat stretches the country for miles around was more or less under water, and trees sticking up out of the flood often reminded the man at the wheel that he had left the natural course of the river for strange waters. It was difficult to stop at will, and in one place a sunken tree served for an anchorage.

It was with the advent of April that the weather took a turn for the better, and on the second day the *Walrus* entered Austria. The Customs examination as Engelhartzell, a little village delightfully situated on the right bank of the river, was of a very simple character and did not cause a long delay. Every mile as the boat sped along revealed new beauties. The steep wooded hills rising on either side were beginning to show signs of coming spring, and already the willows at the waterside were green. Steeper and steeper grew the heights, and wilder. Forests of pine and beech covered the valley sides, and sometimes the river ran under the shadow of steep crags and took sudden turns among precipitous rocks. A hundred side-streams, rushing from the uplands, poured themselves noisily into the main river and helped to swell its volume.

On, on the *Walrus* was swept like a piece of

drift-wood, being spun round sometimes in an eddy and sometimes pausing in a counter-current, her sail hanging helpless for an hour, and then filling with a breeze for a brief spell, as a breath came down a steep ravine. It was indeed an exhilarating method of travelling. Now and again a village many hundred feet above would appear against the sky. Patches of white still lingered on the topmost slopes and gleamed in the sunlight.

So much does the Danube narrow down in places between the hills that the rush of water is always tremendous; but now that every valley was bringing down the recent rain and melting snow it was far greater than usual. Sometimes it was necessary to drop anchor where there was no slacking of the stream, and on these occasions it became a problem how to get it up again. It is impossible to pull a heavy boat against such a torrent, and all sorts of dodges had to be invented. The most useful was that of passing a line round the cable and hauling from a point up stream on the shore. This generally succeeded in uprooting the grapnel, and often in nearly pulling into the river the person who performed the operation.

The entire change from anything conventional, either in way of travelling, or, in fact, in anything else, raised the spirits of master and crew alike, and as the sun gained power every day shoes and stockings were frequently discarded. A halt of twenty-four hours was voted for spring cleaning, and

DÜRRENSTEIN

accordingly, when a delightful spot had been found on the edge of a forest, all the rugs, pots and pans, and clothes from the interior of the *Walrus* were spread out or hung up to air. The captain surpassed himself in darning, and incidentally invented a new kind of lock-stitch, while the mate touched up the life-belt with white paint.

April 4 saw the travellers safely down the "whirling waters," or rapids of the Strudel, near Grein, and into that most romantic district the Wachau, a wild and weird mountain country abounding in legends of long ago.

The great sweeps of forest-covered hill, turning in patches from brown to green, rise into view beyond Melk, and sometimes a castle or a white-walled monastery crowns an apparently inaccessible peak. At Rossatz the river takes a sudden turn and Dürrenstein comes into view. It is a fascinating village, situated at the foot of a ruined castle, in which the faithful Blondel, according to the story, discovered his lost master.

Before another week had elapsed the *Walrus* had left Vienna (where she had been at anchor for some days), and was lying along the shore in a lonely Hungarian plain about fifty miles from Buda-Pesth. The sun had set, and the glow from the west still lit up miles of willow bushes. The river, running now with a gentle current, had receded somewhat, but stretches of mud and *débris* still told of the recent flood.

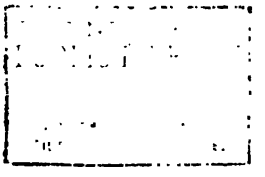
A savoury smell of cooking floated across the marshes, for the mate had prepared something very ornate for dinner, which was in progress. When, a quarter of an hour later, master and crew turned out on to the cabin roof for a smoke in the twilight, they became aware of an all-pervading noise. The whole plain was alive with sound, that of the persistent croaking of innumerable frogs.

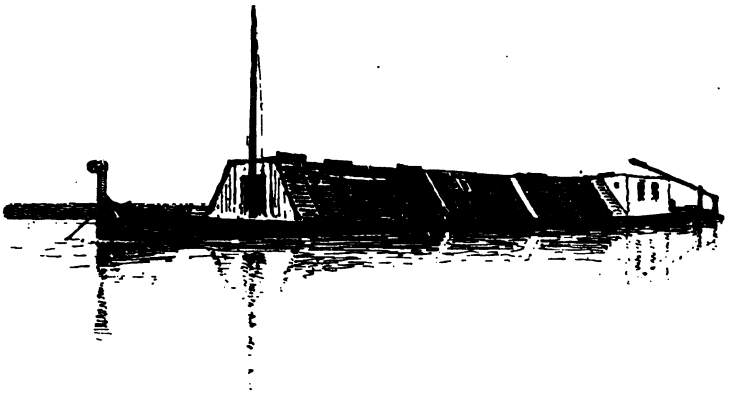
It reminded them that they had entered the region of swamps, and that there was a bottle of quinine in the left-hand bottom locker.

XII

THE RIDDLE OF

THE RIVER





XII

THE RIDDLE OF THE RIVER

Old Buda's stately buildings rising in tiers from the river, showed faintly through the rain as the *Walrus* left her anchorage on the afternoon of April 16, and passed down stream into the lonely region of the great Hungarian plain. Villages become rare and the broad river soon spread itself over the flat country in such multitudinous channels that it was impossible to tell whether the boat was in the river itself or in one of the thousand backwaters.

So much responsibility fell upon the man on duty in deciding the course that the man of leisure generally remained on deck, taking a busman's holiday, and assisting to unravel the mystery of the labyrinth by field-glass and map. Several times the boat ran across a stone barrier, over which

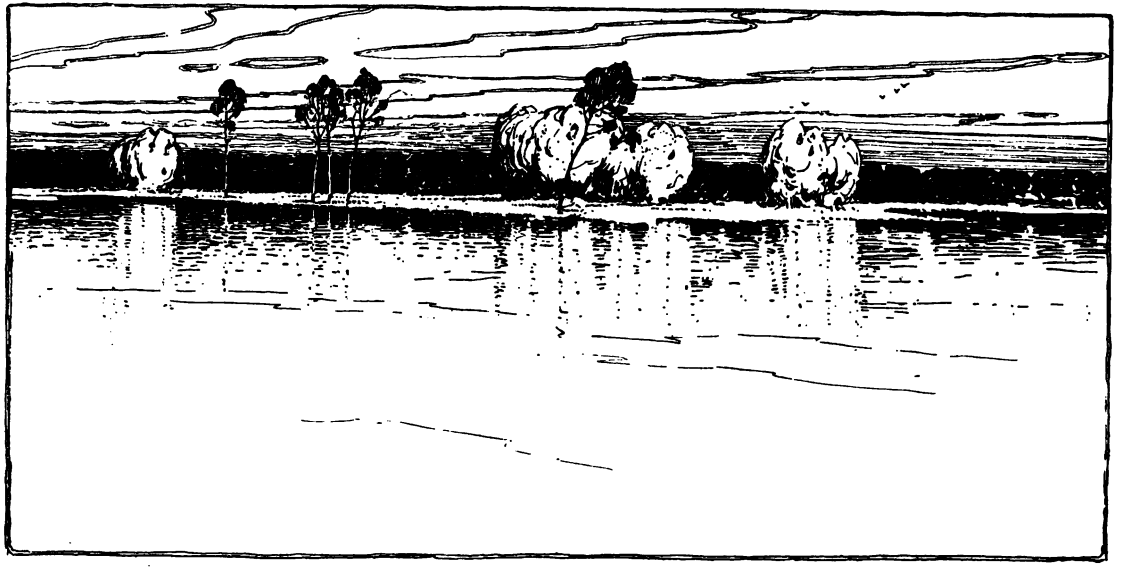
the river still above its normal level was sweeping. There was sufficient water to cover the obstacles completely, and it was impossible to see signs of them far ahead. There was a continual danger of running into these breakwaters, and either damaging the boat or unshipping the rudder, but the worst fear was that the *Walrus* would run into some backwater which led again into the main stream *viâ* a fall or over shallows that would imprison the unwary mariners, leaving them in a few days high and dry. It was clear often that the *Walrus* had quite lost her way. She was evidently travelling over what under normal conditions would be pastures, for every now and then she would strike a bush or find herself in distressing circumstances among the trees of an island. After one of these encounters the anchor was thrown out to avoid further dangers.

"We'd better stop her at that," suggested the mate; "we haven't an hour's more daylight, and we may be getting worse and worse."

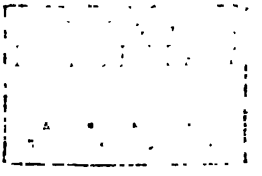
"How much water have you got there? There's two feet this end."

The mate prodded about with a boat-hook over the stern.

"Five feet to three feet," he reported; "a tangle of branches underneath us. We're evidently over a bank and some bushes." The captain went below and put the soup on to boil and appeared again.



A BACKWATER



"If the water drops suddenly," he said, "we shall feel the boat shifting. We may as well turn out and mess about in the night as now. I'm hungry. We'll risk it anyhow. I wish we had brought more bread."

The decision to sail from Buda-Pesth had been a hasty one, and the route seemed so straightforward that neither of them had dreamed of getting *lost* and running out of food. This situation was not at all cheering. It was quite likely that they would be days now getting back into the main river, and it was impossible to make any headway against the stream and go back on their track.

Compensation to some extent was found next morning, for although they were hopelessly out of their reckoning, the sky was clear and the wind fresh. After a good deal of preliminary punting, the *Walrus* was brought into a deep water channel. No great difficulty presented itself ahead, therefore the captain who was off duty left the mate at the helm and turned in for further sleep. Owing to the difficulty the man at the wheel always experienced in making himself heard by the occupant of the cabin, a series of signals had been adopted in cases of emergency.

One bang with the fist on the cabin top indicated mild inquiry, "When it is convenient to come up, do so, I want to consult you."

Two bangs meant a serious situation—"Come up at once. Danger."

Three bangs said, "Come like greased lightning. Annihilation imminent."

The captain had hardly been asleep two minutes when he was startled by three violent blows which shook the boat from stem to stern. He rushed on deck expecting to find himself at the bottom of the river.

The boat was close upon a line of foam.

Crash! The *Walrus* scraped along a barrier. Her rudder was unshipped, and she continued on her way.

"If we sight anything like a house we'll land," the mate said. "We must not risk waiting till we see a village. Our food-supply is rather low.

"Let's have another look at the map."

"It's not much use having a map," argued the other, "unless we know where we are to begin with."

"But we may be altogether on the wrong road," he pursued. "I don't see how we can hope to find the way by chance."

"All right," grunted the captain, "I'll stick to the field-glasses."

And so the two wanderers sat facing opposite ways on top of the cabin, as the *Walrus* floated with the current, one scanning distant objects, with the field-glasses, the other studying the intricacies of a map marking the normal channels of the Danube.

"A Noah's ark," sang out the captain. He had

sighted one of the strange local barges, anchored in a somewhat narrow backwater ahead.

"That looks like a sign of navigable water," the mate remarked hopefully. "At any rate if we make for it we may gain some information from those on board."

The captain agreed. "Let's put on some sail," he suggested. "The wind is getting up dead over our stern."

In a few minutes the boat responded to the breeze, and the solitary craft grew perceptibly nearer.

The vessel proved, however, to be deserted, and judging from her dilapidated appearance, no one had been aboard her for a long time.

"Keep her on her course," shouted the captain, from the bow, as he continued to scan the river with his glasses.

The wind began to whip up the blue surface of the water, and soon the *Walrus* was speeding gaily along, between walls of willow foliage.

"A weir," shouted the captain, "I can see the water leaping up at the fall."

"Shall I keep her at it," yelled the mate.

"Yes, straight ahead at present. I've got the anchor ready in case of danger."

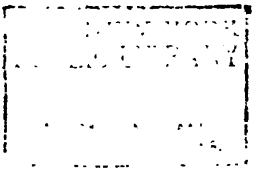
Beyond the white line of foam, the channel took a turn to the right, and there appeared a broad expanse of water. Probably this was the main river again.

The captain took a turn at the tiller and gave his glasses to the mate, who peered ahead.

"Sold again," he cried. "There are no rapids. What you saw must have been the waves dashing themselves against the bank at the bend of the ravine. A steamer in sight. We're in the Danube again!"

XIII

SUSPECTED



XIII

SUSPECTED

HAD the Englishman known that two terrible figures with fixed bayonets stood against the sky looking down upon them from the bank, as morning dawned on April 19, had they known that their movements in an insignificant village, during the previous day, had been noted, their sending off papers and drawings to London watched, their general suspicious demeanour reported, they would no doubt have been unable to sleep at all. So unconscious, however, were they of these intrigues against them, that they remained in bed until about an hour after their usual time for rising.

The mate was on duty, and when he crawled outside to observe the weather he was politely requested by one of the soldiers to hand over his passport

and that of his companion, and to consider himself under arrest.

The captain was awakened by the unusual sound of conversation within hearing of the boat.

"What's the matter ?" he inquired.

"Arrested again," the mate answered, in a bored tone.

"Tell them to wait till after breakfast," was the reply.

The soldiers retired to some distance but still within sight, and when the meal was over escorted the strangers to a room at the local inn, which was the only building at the waterside, and proceeded with a rough-and-ready examination. An English passport had apparently never been in their hands before, and the general impression conveyed by this ornate document seemed to be that the captain was Lord Lansdowne, and that one of this gentleman's many titles therein enumerated, must refer to the mate, a member of the British Aristocracy.

The upshot of the inquiry was that the mate obtained permission to go to Buda-Pesth, where he would be able to explain the situation to the Minister of the Interior.

The captain was kept as a hostage. He was treated well, but under constant supervision. At first he was shown into a little room at the back of the inn, and supplied with food, paper and ink. Imitating the example of one John Bunyan, he employed his time writing, while he became an

AN OBJECT OF INTEREST TO THE VILLAGERS

object of interest to the villagers. These could see him through the window as he sat at a small table apparently intent on his work.

The good people at the inn had not realised that the captain spoke English. When he essayed a remark which they could not understand, they sent for an old villager whose slight knowledge of German had made him famous for miles round. This worthy man endeavoured to converse with the prisoner, and as he failed to make him understand anything at all, his reputation as a linguist suffered greatly.

The mate did not turn up again on the evening of the second day as expected, and as the novelty of the situation wore off, the Englishman began to find his solitary life rather slow.

Good Friday morning and still the mate had not returned. The prisoner was allowed to go to church with the worthy villagers, but he noticed that a man who followed him to the entrance waited for him until the service was over and accompanied him home.

In the afternoon, however, a sudden change came over his captors. He was given back his passport, and told that he might travel where he would. Evidently the mate had succeeded in his mission, and instructions had been sent to the police. In the evening the mate himself returned. Everything had been cleared up, and the most profuse apologies were made.

The *Walrus* weighed anchor next morning before it was light, and dropped down stream. By the late afternoon she had floated down to Paks, a little town built on the side of a small hill, the slopes of which caught the yellow sunlight as it streamed across the marshes. The white walled, thatched cottages on each side of the road leading into the main thoroughfare were bright with decorations in honour of the occasion. It was Easter Eve, and the good people attired in their bravest clothes thronged from all sides to vespers.

Through the village and into the church, with accompaniment of chant and swinging censer filed the procession of the Host. Tapers and candles burned in every cottage window as it passed.

When twilight deepened, the light from the sacred building fell upon a multitude reverently kneeling in the roadway and responding to the deep tones of the chant within.

"Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites demisit inanes."

XIV

THE LAND OF THE

WILLOW FOREST

XIV

THE LAND OF THE WILLOW FOREST

BETWEEN Buda-Pesth and the Transylvanian Alps there stretches the great plain of Hungary, a fertile land, thinly peopled and unpenetrated in many parts by railways. Through this for five hundred miles the Danube finds a course dividing into many channels and cutting up the flat land into innumerable islands. Vast swamps intersected by backwaters extend along the region of the river. These are so frequently flooded that the villages are situated miles inland or on the spurs of hills which appear here and there along the southern boundary of the plain.

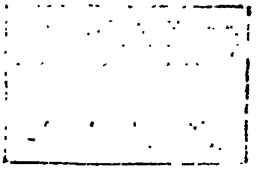
Day after day, as the *Walrus* made her way through the lonely land, she seldom passed signs of human habitation. A steamer now and then paddled noisily among the islands, startling the

waterfowl and sending up a wave along the green shore, but its passage savoured of the incongruous. It was a visitor from another world. Its advent intensified the stillness of Nature, as a match flaring in the gloom deepens the night.

Great forests of uncut willows, fantastic in sunlight and ghostly in shade, clothed the islands and the shore. Sometimes the stream carried the boat along the fringe of a flooded glade. Dark and mysterious caverns of foliage, gaunt arms and black writhing trunks reflected mass for mass their dark images in the glassy floor of water. Then an opening would disclose a broad expanse of level meadow land, yellow with buttercups and planted with goodly trees; the well-kept grounds, it might be, of some country seat. But the eagle hovering high overhead or the stork solemnly observing the movements of the *Walrus* held undisputed possession of the estate. Wild ducks seemed to be as plentiful as sparrows in London, and unceasingly the shrill croak of countless hosts of frogs made accompaniment to the numerous sounds of wild life around.

With supplies for several days the two explorers entered this land of a thousand islands. The world was green, for April was now old. They had left alike railways and towns. No letter could reach them now nor could they post one. What need, then, to think of anything for a day or two but the delights of the willow forest, of sunshine and of rolling river?

VAST SWAMPS EXTEND
ALONG THE REGION
OF THE RIVER



And so like savages they lived, rejecting clothing when it was hot, taking to the water when they felt inclined, floating on or anchoring where and when they would. It was an event to see a column of smoke rising from a woodman's fire or to catch sight of a solitary fisherman paddling his canoe. Now and then in some backwater they would come across a high-prowed galley which looked as if it belonged to the time of the Roman occupation. Whenever bread ran low, as often it did, half a day on the stream would almost invariably bring them to a group of water-mills anchored in the river, and these they knew foretold a village not far distant, although generally invisible.

* * * * *

It was on the second day after one of these expeditions for food that the *Walrus* lay moored to the bank under a canopy of intersecting willow boughs. Evening was falling and the yellow sun lit up the domes of thick foliage across the water and sent a few stray shafts through the trees close at hand on to the boat. They fell upon the cabin top, which on this occasion was doing duty as a dinner table. The mate had spread the feast. In addition to a mysterious dish of his own manufacture there was present an enormous loaf of black bread and a tremendous jar of native red wine.

The captain was aft, sitting with his feet on the corner of the table and munching something slowly, at the same time apparently lost to a sense of his

immediate environment and enjoying the feast of gorgeous colour. His attention was arrested by the mate, who, with a well-thumbed copy of his beloved Omar spread out before him, was holding aloft the giant loaf and commencing a line or two suitable to the occasion.

> "'Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
> A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou—'"

"Shut up!" snapped the captain, who was suddenly awakened from his reverie. "There are some chaps who can never enjoy anything without inflicting upon you a poetical quotation on the subject."

"And others," retaliated the mate, who knew how to rouse the skipper into an argument, "who cannot appreciate it. I never came across any one who was so down on poetry."

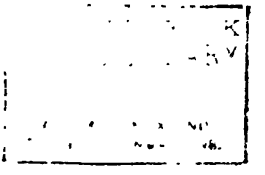
He was always annoyed when any one attempted to criticise Omar.

"It is not poetry in the abstract I object to," argued the captain. "It is the way it is forced upon you by poets and their admirers. A poet can never write you a letter or tell you anything in a straightforward manner. Even in the ordinary courtesies of life he forces his verse upon you."

"An example," the mate insisted.

"A hundred if you like," retorted the captain, now warming for the fray. "What about this—*To a young lady who had been reproached for taking*

AS IF IT BELONGED TO THE TIME
OF THE ROMAN OCCUPATION



long walks in the country—Wordsworth? Or *Lines written to a gentleman who had sent him a newspaper and offered to continue same free of expense*—Burns? True, he was a Scot, but—by Jove, if I were the Home Secretary——"

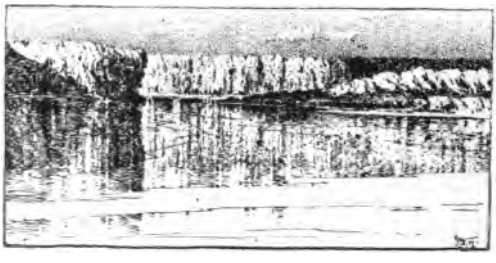
What the master of the *Walrus* would have done had he been appointed to that high position it is impossible to guess, for just at that moment the mate managed to drop the loaf into the water and the speech ended abruptly. The captain seized a boat-hook and made a wild attempt to haul it in, but the swift stream had swept it out of reach.

It has been necessary to dwell upon this painful controversy and its sequel, not because it is particularly instructive but because it explains to the reader the reason why the *Walrus* at dawn the next morning was dropping down stream, and how it was that a curious incident befell the two adventurers. Food had been short before, and now that the last loaf had dramatically disappeared it was necessary to push on, or to live on a diet of frogs. Such a possibility had been discussed, but it was to be hoped it would not come to that. It is one thing to eat frogs' legs beautifully served in a Paris restaurant, and quite another to go and slay the frogs yourself and prepare the meal. The chances of getting near enough to a wild duck to hit it with a revolver had been considered too slender to be considered.

After a few hours—to be accurate, it was 7.30—the mate gave a shout.

"Civilisation!" he yelled, pointing to the left bank, "a telegraph post."

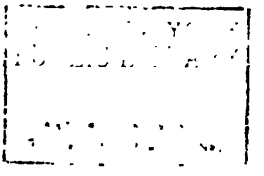
True, it was but a crooked tree stem with the bark still upon it, but it undoubtedly carried a wire, and a wire must lead somewhere. Accordingly the boat was brought up to the bank and moored. To the right a much overgrown path led among the trees by the river bank, and on the left a rough cart track bore inland, and it was in the latter direction that the two famished explorers struck out, hope of obtaining food being kept alive by the sight of the telegraph wire borne aloft upon a decrepit series of rude poles.



XV

THE INVOLUNTARY

PILGRIMS



XV

THE INVOLUNTARY PILGRIMS

THE road emerged from the waste of willow growth into a cultivated belt of land whereon patches of mustard in flower blaze here and there upon a vivid green expanse of young corn. Beyond this, and half hidden by an orchard in blossom, appeared a cluster of white walls, brown roofs, and a steeple.

The principal thoroughfare which led across the village was scarcely to be distinguished from a rather neglected section of a ploughed field save for its greater unevenness, and, although now its deep ruts and formidable ridges were as unyielding to the feet as flint, in the time of rain it must have been an altogether impassable quagmire. It was not to be wondered at that there was no sign of cart or horse, for neither would have lasted long in such an environment. A line of whitewashed

cottages looked at each other across the narrow strip of desert, thus showing that it was seriously intended to be taken as a road. Another wildly uneven track ran through the village at right angles. At the cross-roads stood a church, and opposite this, according to the universal custom of all nations, a public-house.

To this the travellers turned. They saw depicted on a board, upon which was inscribed the word "SÖR," a highly realistic painting of a beer-mug filled to the brim and foaming bravely in the grasp of an armless hand. On the other side of the entrance the legend "BOR" was further explained by means of an equally vivid but less rampant representation of a glass jar resplendent with vermilion wine. Thus encouraged they entered and sat down. That no one came in answer to their repeated tapping upon the table did not cause surprise, for even a short acquaintance with Hungarian country inns had accustomed them to consider twenty minutes a reasonable time. But, although there were plenty of houses and not a few outward signs of their present occupation, it was strange that hitherto they had met no one. From the open window they commanded a view of three roads. The only signs of life they could discover were a few geese, two or three little woolly pigs that looked as if they ought to have been sheep, and a small child occupied in making dust-pies in the middle of the road with nothing on but a large

clerical hat. It was clearly hopeless to get any information out of any of these inhabitants, and the endeavours of the strangers to make themselves heard were fruitless, for apparently there was no one to hear them. The captain made a tour of the premises but returned without finding anybody.

"We might try the shop across there," he suggested. They left the *Gasthaus* in no good humour. The sun was gaining power, and the rough dusty road was unpleasant walking in carpet slippers. The explorers had been hungry and now they were thirsty as well.

But at the shop they fared no better than at the inn. True, a large pictorial effort told of bread and buns, of butter and blacking, of candles and cheese and of other stores unusual both in quality and bulk. But of what use was it to know that the eggs which hens laid at exclusive rates for the establishment were of a size seldom attained save on an ostrich farm?—for no one seemed to be on the premises and the repeated ringing of the bell and the energetic banging of fists seemed to do nothing towards bringing any one from behind the scenes. And so they sat down upon a rough wooden seat in front of the shop and stared at the gorgeous sign upon its walls.

These pictorial representations of a shop's goods are very numerous in Hungary, made necessary by the various languages spoken within its borders. It may be that a purchaser will speak any one of

five languages and one only. It is impossible to print every advertisement and notice five times over, hence the painted signs which aim at making any letterpress unnecessary. This example of the art, however, was particularly ambitious. It was as unique as the modern "realistic" novel. The style was the same. Everything was put in with the sloppiness and inaccuracy of the worst scene-painting, except a few unpleasant and particularly blatant details, such as the carraway seeds in the cheese or labels on the bottles, which were depicted with Pre-Raphaelite decision.

Before the hungry men had been long seated in contemplation of the good things which they were unable to obtain, the church bells began ringing violently.

"That sounds as if some one is alive," exclaimed the captain; "perhaps they are all in church. Let's see."

They had hardly risen to their feet when they perceived at the far end of the street a crowd of people and a number of banners. Apparently a procession from the fields was entering the village. This then was the explanation of the deserted aspect of everything. The whole population had turned out to some festival and now they were on their way back. Children in bright dresses led the way. Then came a group of some thirty boys, probably a guild. After them walked the men, all wearing round caps of skin and square-cut coats

A HUNGARIAN VILLAGE FESTIVAL

N

that looked as if they were made out of dull yellow blankets reaching to the knee. The main group, however, were still too far off to be seen in detail.

"Whatever are those gorgeous vestments?" queried the captain; "they can't be priests, there are such a host of them."

The mate, who was always ready to jump to conclusions in matters ecclesiastical, suggested that a monastery might be out for a holiday.

"We're not in it for costume," he added. "Everybody seems to be dressed up to the nines."

The two dusty breakfast-seekers glanced at one another and smiled. They were both wearing old carpet slippers. Neither had a collar, and neither possessed a hat. One of them, it is true, had shaved within four days, but such smartness as this gave was more than counterbalanced by the multi-coloured patches in his clothing and the conspicuous absence of heels to his stockings.

When the first part of the procession had passed by and the centre had drawn nearer, it suddenly became evident that the blaze of colour was caused not by priestly vestments, but by the extraordinary dress of some two hundred women. If it be possible to imagine a bright antimacassar adapted as a skirt, together with a dressing-jacket, much too big, fashioned out of a gorgeous cope, some faint idea may be formed of the imposing appearance of each worthy matron. A white-haired priest walked in their midst, but he looked entirely insignificant

beside what appeared to the Englishmen to be the rampant sacerdotalism of the laity.

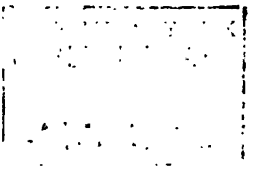
Before the dusty wayfarers, who were standing modestly aside, had recovered from their surprise at the strangeness of the scene, one of the women, who had been watching them as the pageant slowly went forward, detached herself from the rest and came towards them. She, like the others, carried a bundle of young green corn tied up in a handkerchief, but she had tucked this under her arm and was fingering some small coins.

"A collection," whispered the captain. He was about to dive into his pocket for a suitable amount when he felt a small coin pressed into his hand. At first he thought it must be from the mate, but sure enough the woman stood before him and it was undoubtedly from her that the contribution came.

While the receiver of the gift was still gasping for breath, the mate was solemnly presented in like manner with a *kreutzer*, but he with greater presence of mind managed to murmur a word of thanks to the donor before she disappeared.

The procession entered the church. However, there was not room for every one. Many who were compelled to remain outside turned their attention to the strangers. They endeavoured to explain that they were travelling in their boat which was on the river, but no one could grasp their meaning. Gradually they became the sole subject of

PRESENTS WERE HEAPED
UPON THEM



conversation. Presents of bacon, cake, and other eatables done up in parcels were heaped upon them. They received them with thanks but without the slightest idea why they were so generously treated. One old lady dressed in black, evidently a widow, endeavoured very earnestly to explain something to the captain. She pointed up the road to a certain cottage and then to herself.

"She means she lives there," suggested the mate.

"Very nice house indeed," said the captain, looking at it as though it was different from all the others.

Again the woman pointed to the house, walked a few steps towards it, then turned and beckoned the strangers on. She pointed to her mouth and made pretence of eating.

"An invitation to breakfast," the captain whispered. "I'm on this."

"Or lunch," the mate responded. "Remember it's getting on in the day."

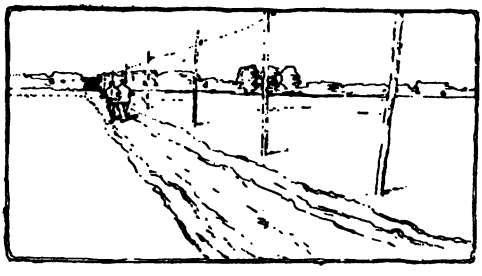
"I don't care which it is," said the captain; "come on."

The woman, delighted that her meaning had been grasped, led the way to a whitewashed cottage with thatched roof. She found seats for the visitors and then produced large bowls of new milk and great slices of bread. It was the most enjoyable meal of which they had partaken for many a long day, for they had eaten nothing for sixteen hours. The mate managed to converse with the good

woman in German, of which language she knew a few words. He obtained two pieces of information. One was that the day was St. Mark's and the occasion of the Blessing of the Fields. The other was unexpected. The people, he was told, felt honoured at receiving two such Holy men and being able to help them on their way to Palestine.

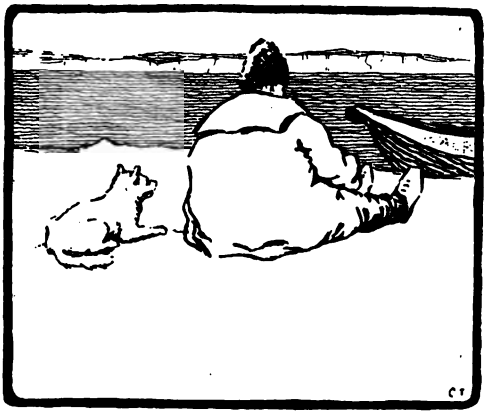
"We had better get back to the boat," suggested the captain somewhat nervously. "It's too late to explain anything now."

They rose to depart. They thanked the hospitable old lady for her kindness. They waved solemn farewells to the assembled people, who, to the great relief of the involuntary pilgrims, did not attempt to follow them beyond the outskirts of the village. With such dignity as they could command they marched out, laden with their many parcels and the richer by two *kreutzers*, towards the spot where the *Walrus* lay moored.

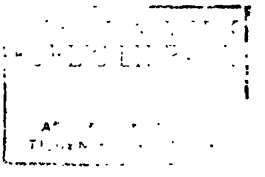


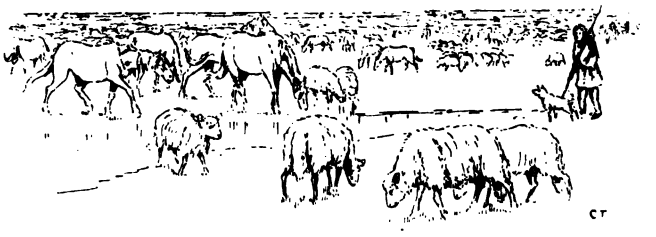
XVI

THE DWELLERS ON



THE PLAIN





XVI

THE DWELLERS ON THE PLAIN

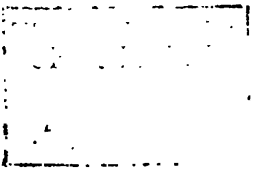
DURING the next few days there was practically no wind at all, and the *Walrus* drifted downstream. Hills, on which in places were signs of agricultural activity, appeared on the right bank, and formed the boundary of the river. They gradually assumed a more rugged character until about thirty miles above Belgrad a series of cliffs hung sheer over the water. To the left, as far as eye could see, stretched a vast flat expanse of grass almost devoid of trees or bushes, and inundated in places by the river, so that it became a multitude of green islands. Scattered all over this, and sometimes walking in the shallow water from island to island, was a collection of animals tended here and there by a solitary watcher and suggesting the Lowther Arcade more than anything else, for nowhere save in the fancy

shops had either captain or mate seen such an array of strange beasts. There were ordinary cattle and ordinary sheep and ordinary ponies ; but in addition to these were multi-coloured goats, some curious grey oxen, and large flocks of sheep, which on closer inspection became herds of swine, although they retained their curly wool.

Night fell as the *Walrus* came into sight of Semlin and the Servian hills beyond, just visible in the gloaming. Two barges with high sterns were dropping down river ahead, each with a large square sail which hung idle, for there was not a breath of wind, and each one rowed laboriously by half a dozen men with huge sweeps. The *Walrus* dropped anchor close to the left bank, and the unwieldy ships floated away into the darkness. Across the plain, here and there, twinkling red points denoted the encampments of herdsmen or shepherds. One of the fires was not far distant, and the newly arrived explorers determined to make friends with the lonely inhabitants of this strange district.

Accordingly they strolled over, the captain armed with his sketch-book, and the mate, wiser in his generation, with a quantity of tobacco and a bottle of wine. This last item could be observed sticking out of a capacious side pocket. An enclosure, made with rushes some twelve feet in height and containing a flock of geese, hid the visitors as they approached, so that they came upon the shepherds somewhat suddenly. Two men and a boy were

THE CAPTAIN MUST HAVE
LOOKED VERY DIABOLICAL



seated on the ground, watching a pot which was boiling furiously, illustrating the futility of proverbs.

They were apparently too astonished to do more than stare in a dazed way at their visitors. At first no doubt they debated in their minds whether these had dropped from the sky or risen from the earth. The captain had expected such a reception, for on other occasions he had noticed that the inhabitants of these lonely marshes had never been able to connect the river with their mysterious arrival in their midst. The Englishmen were evidently not bargees or fishermen, they argued, and how any one else could find his way into this desolate region, where no conveyances were known and no roads, they could not imagine.

The effect of the incident on this occasion was heightened by the fact that the captain was dressed in shiny black oilskins which reflected the fitful red firelight. He must have looked very diabolical. He had adopted this form of dress not from choice but from necessity. Having drenched one suit by a partial ducking, and having as yet not completed extensive darning operations upon the only remaining one, he had been compelled to choose between oilskins and evening-dress. He would undoubtedly have been taken for Satan himself had he appeared there at night in the latter costume.

The captain, since his return to England, when he relates this experience, tells how, on account of his imposing personal appearance, he struck such

terror into the hearts of all that beheld him that one of them crossed himself in abject fear. But the mate, whose conscientiousness always spoils a good story, says the man was in reality trying to brush away a troublesome fly. Thus the captain can spin a yarn with full effect only when the mate is not present.

A greeting on the part of the newcomers and a prompt offer of tobacco seemed to break the spell under which the shepherds had fallen; for they made some reply in an unknown tongue and signed to them to be seated, scrutinising meanwhile the wearing apparel of their visitors. The visitors, on the other hand, found equal if not greater interest in the costume of the peasants, who were dressed in rough sheep-skins which hung loosely over their shoulders. Below this they wore white tunics reaching to the knee and fastened with leather belts in which were stuck formidable-looking knives. Their shoes consisted of skins wrapped round the foot. Long black hair hung down to their shoulders, and the whole was surmounted in each case by a soft felt hat such as is worn by an English clergyman.

No one spoke for a long time; and the captain and mate, as they found themselves taking part in such a picturesque firelight tableau, would neither of them have been surprised if a burst of applause had greeted them, or if one of the figures seated near had risen to commence a long recitative, or sung of life on the boundless plain.

A HUNGARIAN SHEPHERD

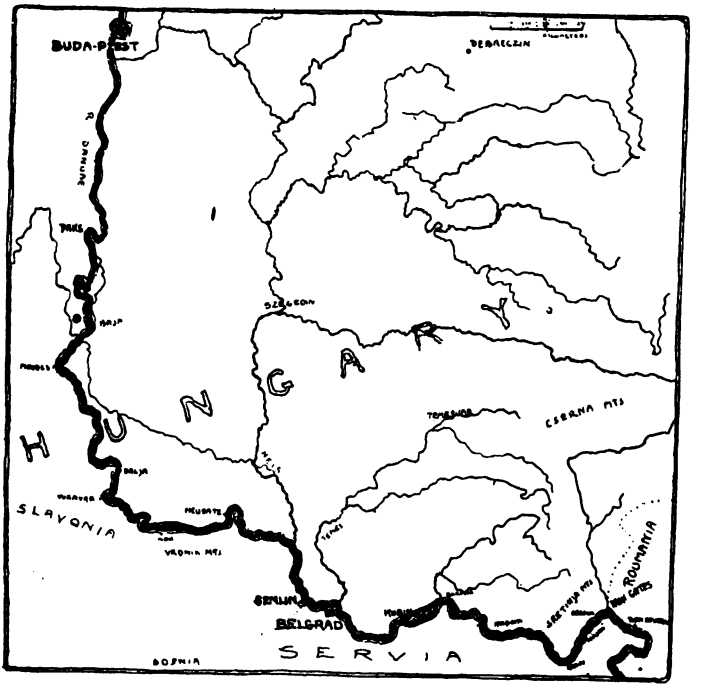
An attempt was made to start a general conversation. The strangers were unable to try Hungarian, which was probably the language of their hosts, for beyond the words for wine and beer they knew none. The mate began German, which they failed to understand, although they endeavoured to meet the difficulty by offering to speak either in Roumanian or Servian—a suggestion which hardly solved the problem. In spite, however, of the absence of mutual understanding by means of conversation, friendship was strengthened by the production of the bottle of wine with which the visitors had been provided. The captain delighted them by drawing their portraits and presenting one to each. These productions had but the faintest resemblance to the originals, but by means of realistic treatment in details of dress, and assisted by the fact that one was an old man, one a young man, and one a boy, he managed to show which was which, and thus cause unbounded satisfaction. When the Englishmen returned to the boat, the shepherds accompanied them and gazed with great interest at what they seemed to consider a very extraordinary craft. On looking in the cabin they seemed to be astonished at the number of miscellaneous articles stored away in so small a space. The captain presented them with some more tobacco and with two boxes of matches—a commodity which they seemed to value considerably. Then, with a cordial "good-night" repeated in several

languages, the peasants returned in the direction of their fire.

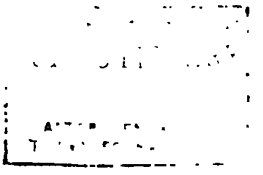
It was the mate's turn to take first "duty" in the morning, and when he encountered the raw air at 5.0 A.M. he envied the soundly sleeping captain not a little. He was preparing to get under way when he perceived a shepherd approaching. The man who was not one of the friends of last night, although dressed somewhat similarly, was accompanied by a dog. When he had approached within a few yards of the river bank, he sat down, the dog doing likewise, and together they stared at the *Walrus* as though she were some strange exhibit which they had paid their money to see and meant to have their value for it.

The mate watched him for some time.

As soon as the stranger noticed that he was being observed, he arose and in his own language addressed the Englishman. This, however, did not make clear the object of his visit. Seeing that he had not been understood, he pointed to his pipe, which was filled but unlighted, and made signs to indicate the striking of matches, at the same time producing a *kreutzer* and tendering it as payment. He had doubtless heard of the *Walrus* from the other shepherds, and, from their probably exaggerated account of her wonderful interior, had imagined her to be a travelling shop which occasionally visited these remote regions with a few stores suited to the needs of these simple peasants. When he had been



THE DANUBE FROM BUDA-PESTH TO THE IRON GATES



handed a box of matches and when he found that no payment was required, his astonishment was great. What sort of traders were these, he thought, who asked nothing for their goods ? Nevertheless, he was extremely grateful and he expressed his thanks volubly.

The mate asked him to come on board. The visitor, followed by his faithful dog, accepted the invitation. A limited interchange of ideas was effected by means of signs, and a bottle of Schiedam was produced to counteract the chilling effect produced by the cold, damp air.

While the host and his guest were thus employed, the dog, evidently feeling rather out of it, thought he would explore the cabin, whence the heavy breathing of the captain proceeded and aroused his curiosity. He started by knocking over with his wagging tail a jar of something liquid. This emptied itself over the captain's feet which protruded from under a heap of blankets. Such instances, however, being of common occurrence in so limited a space as the cabin of the *Walrus*, the sleeper merely anathematised the mate for his clumsiness and continued sleeping. The muffled voice first drew the dog's attention to the recumbent figure, and, wishing a closer inspection, he examined with great interest the captain's face, which happened to be turned towards him. The captain, on the other hand, feeling a cold wet thing being pressed against his cheek, opened his eyes with a start and beheld, set

in a shaggy head, two terrible eyes peering into his.

All at once there rushed across his mind tales of the fierce wolves that roamed in these Hungarian wilds, and the terrible truth dawned upon him. They had discovered the boat and probably by this time were enjoying a hearty breakfast off the mangled remains of the mate.

He would not die tamely, however, in spite of the overwhelming odds and his unarmed condition. Therefore with a yell, meant no doubt to strike terror into the enemy, he sprang up to grapple desperately with his foe.

The dog, which was little more than a puppy, evidently thought that the whole thing was some kind of game, and, thoroughly entering into the spirit of the thing, seized hold of a leg of his unfortunate victim's pyjamas, and began to "worry" it with all his might.

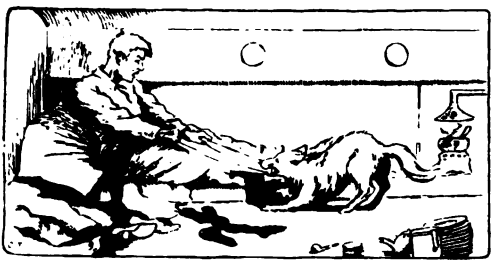
The noise of battle soon reached the ears of the mate and his visitor. The latter looked in the open door and called off the hound. The captain, still uncertain whether he was dreaming or awake, was not helped towards deciding the question by seeing a fierce long-haired figure armed with a dagger, crouching in the entrance to the cabin; but the mate's voice asking what on earth was going on reassured him.

By this time the sleeper had been so thoroughly awakened that he gave up all attempt to turn in

again. He dressed and came out "on deck." A strong wind had got up in the night, and with a reefed sail flapping spasmodically the boat was tugging to be off. The wolf and the fierce brigand of ten minutes previously looked very harmless on second view, and the dog was allowed to carry off a large ship's biscuit, which he proceeded to devour on shore. The Englishmen said good-bye to the shepherd, and they were soon beating up against the wind and in rough water towards Semlin. Belgrad proved disappointing, and a short stay sufficed to exhaust its points of interest.

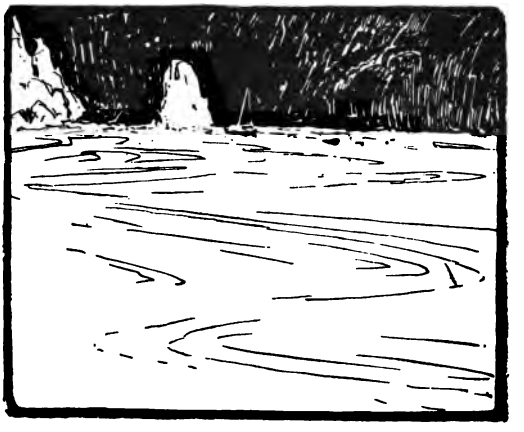
Before May was a day old, the *Walrus* had left the region of the plain and entered the wild and rocky country of the Southern Carpathians. At Bazias steep heights tower on either side of the river, and gradually force its waters into a narrower channel. At Moldova the hills stand back and one branch of the Danube runs round a large island. Beyond this point the streams unite again and appear at first sight to end abruptly in a broad basin at the feet of serried cliffs. On the Servian shore are the rocks and water caverns, from which are said to issue the hosts of stinging flies which infest the herds in summer. On the other side great sweeps of upland guard the entrance to the gorge. Below the solitary crag which stands in the midst of swirling waters, the river takes a sudden turn, and, pent up between rugged and precipitous walls, plunges into a narrow gorge.

The *Walrus*, when she reached this spot, was caught by whirlpools and conflicting eddies, spun round and round, and at an ever-increasing pace hurled down in a mad race towards the rapids of Drencova and the rocks of the Iron Gates.

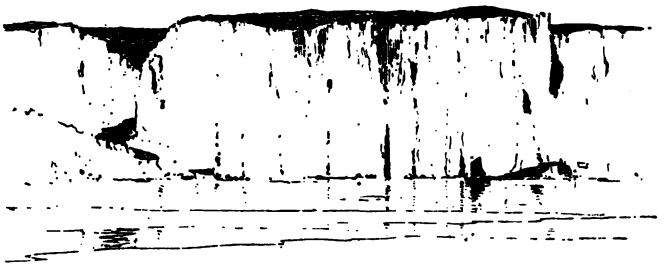


XVII

THE DEFILE OF



KASAN



XVII

THE DEFILE OF KASAN

THE sun sank as the *Walrus* sped onwards between the terrible walls of the darkening ravine, and the red light still flaming from the topmost crags on the left served to deepen the blackness of the swirling waters.

In a few minutes it would be night as far as the river was concerned, but the inhospitable cliffs afforded no hold for an anchor, even if the boat could have been brought up against the stream. At one place an eddying backwash at the foot of a jutting rock seemed to promise a slacker stream, but the captain decided to push on in hope of finding something better. Such calm places are often nothing but a lure to take the unwary boatman into a maze of treacherous currents.

"A village on the left!" shouted the mate,

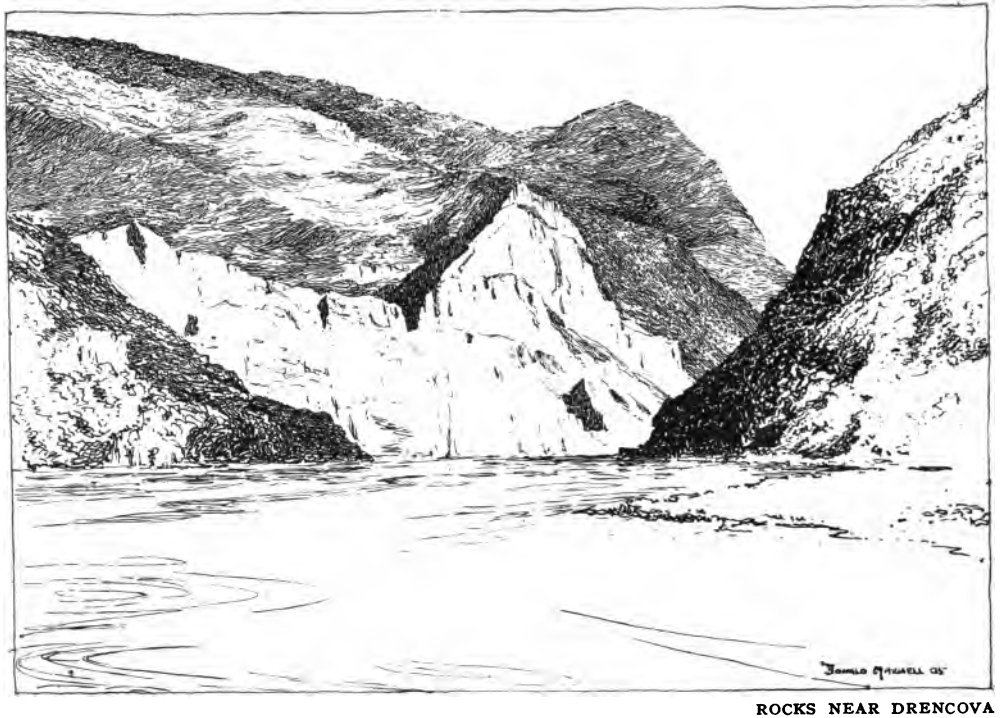
who was peering ahead. The captain was watching the water.

Instinctively the look-out man seized a scull and started rowing. The boat was headed towards the shore. A long black object shot by on the right. It was one of the local buoys, a floating tree-trunk carrying a red disc.

The mate saw it and sprang to his feet to look out ahead. He could see a white line stretching across the river from side to side.

"Rapids!" he yelled. The captain left the helm, scrambled forward, and joined him. Together they pulled and brought the boat's head to meet the foe. It was impossible to enter the foaming water broadside on. The idea of making the village had to be abandoned. The speed of the stream was increasing perceptibly, and the *Walrus* was shot into a line of breakers. She literally bounded down from wave to wave. "Easy!" commanded the captain. "It's not so bad as it looks. These rapids are nothing to a sea-built boat." Almost before he had finished speaking this first instalment of the Danube rapids had been passed.

"I think they're very much overrated," remarked the mate as he shipped his scull. "If it had been in broad daylight we might have passed such a place without noticing it. We've been down worse places higher up. I suppose that was Drencova. If not, I haven't the faintest idea where we are within twenty miles."



ROCKS NEAR DRENCOVA

The effect of the scene at this point is indescribable. Imagine the Rhine gorge below Bingen, unpeopled and unspoilt. Imagine the same river narrowed down with her precipitous heights piled up one upon another until you can exaggerate them no more. Think what it must be like to find materialised around you an improbable Turnerian dream, and you may picture faintly the nature of the scene. To the travellers who had just passed through hundreds of miles of level country the rocky heights were all the wilder and the torrent boomed a deeper note.

The boat here hung back and here rushed forward. The stream played with her as a cat plays with a mouse. At times she spun round and round a whirlpool to be carried off and unwound by a rival eddy.

Soon the stream swept round to the right and hurled itself against a black wall of rock. Then it rebounded and, turning the corner abruptly to the left, widened out into a basin flanked by slopes of pasture land and woods. On the Hungarian side a road ran along the edge of the river. Beside this the *Walrus* found an anchorage in water comparatively still.

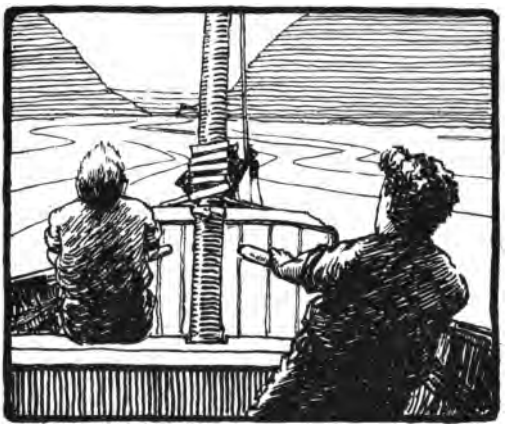
As soon as the boat had been secured, supper was under way, and enjoyed in the open air. It was a meal not easily forgotten. The little sheltered spot which formed a natural harbour, and the dark mysterious woods hanging like curtains between

black and frowning crags, the musical gurgle of the eddies swirling into calmer regions of the bay, all came as a contrast to the turmoil and wildness of the last few hours journey.

Already the wind had died down and, as darkness fell, no sound was heard but the sound of waters, echoing in mighty Gregorian tones down the aisles of the ravine, solemn voices of nature, deep calling unto deep through the stillness of night.

XVIII

THE QUEST OF THE



IRON GATES

XVIII

THE QUEST OF THE IRON GATES

HAD the *Walrus* met a steamer during her flight through the Kasan it is impossible to imagine what would have happened, for neither craft could have stopped, and even had the speed of the stream permitted it, the depth of water, 300 feet, would have made anchoring impossible.

At one place the river narrows down quite suddenly between huge cliffs which stand no more than 120 yards apart. Square holes in the rocks on the right a few feet from the water-line, show where the beams had once been which supported the Roman Road the Emperor Trajan had built, and an inscription to this effect, now almost indecipherable, is cut into the rock.

The cliffs end somewhat abruptly after this, and the river broadens out into a channel over a

kilometre in breadth, so that the boat was got under sail.

As the travellers did not intend to go further than the Roumanian frontier during the day, there was plenty of time. They therefore brought the *Walrus* to land and indulged in the luxury of a meal, while moored to a grassy bank on the Hungarian side.

An old peasant, who was making his way along the road, stopped when he saw the *Walrus*, and stared at the travellers as they proceeded with their repast. The mate thought the occasion a good one to find out information as to distances and places on the next day's sailing. He therefore attempted to pave the way to an instructive conversation with the newcomer by making him an offer of tobacco, which offer was gratefully and promptly accepted.

Beyond this preliminary act of courtesy it was difficult to get, for it became evident very soon that neither of them could understand a word which the other uttered.

"Find out how far it is from here to the Iron Gates," suggested the captain.

The mate, rendered desperate by his failure to make himself understood by conversation, endeavoured to indicate by weird signs that the *Walrus* was going on down river. How far was it to the Iron Gates?

"Eiserne Tor :—kilometres?" he asked.

The old man seemed to undestand the question

and said something in reply. He kept repeating one word, but neither of the Englishmen could make anything of it. Then, seized with a sudden

HE SCRATCHED A FIGURE 3

idea, he scratched a figure 3 with his stick in the roadway.

"It can't be three kilometres," said the mate, somewhat puzzled. "It must be at least twenty miles."

But the man would not budge from the statement that it was three somethings to the Iron

Gates. He drew the figure still more clearly, lest the sign should have been misread. Then he wished the Englishmen "Good night," and departed on his way. The mate shouted words of thanks after him.

"What on earth does he mean?" he asked.

"He might mean anything," the captain replied; "the 3 may refer to any measure but that of distance. On the whole Continent of Europe I have never yet had a direct answer to an inquiry as to the number of kilometres from place to place. There seems to be a particular aversion to speaking of long measure. Almost every expedient is used to inform you but that. Generally it will be in hours. If so, you have to find out whether it is hours walking or in the train. Then, according to the country you are in, you must calculate how fast people walk, and what is the speed of the trains. You must ask whether the time is measured by express train or ordinary. In this part of the world near the river, the answer may be the number of hours it takes to float down on the stream (as on a raft) or to go by steamboat. In Holland I have known the question answered by quite another method."

"How far is it from X to Y?"

"While you smoke two pipes."

If you are not very well acquainted with the district, thus knowing the size of the average pipe smoked and the time that the average man takes

A VILLAGE WELL
IN ROUMANIA

to smoke it, you will not be very much helped by the information.

"The idea might be extended," the mate observed. "'How far is it from Southampton to Berwick ? '—' Oh, about three pairs of boots.' "

"In London," the captain continued, "you might have this kind of thing: 'Can you tell me, my good man, the distance from here to Wapping Old Stairs ? '—' Well, guv'ner, I reckon it'ud be about two pints of four an' 'arf ! ' "

Armed with such information as the old man's figure had given them (which they decided must mean three hours by steamboat), the voyagers weighed anchor, but on account of the want of sea room were not able to use the sail.

At two o'clock Alt Orsova was passed and Neu Orsova sighted. In a few miles the *Walrus* would be making the dreaded passage of the Iron Gates.

For a week back, and especially since they had approached so near, almost every one who had spoken with the "mad Englishmen," had warned them of the terrors of this rock-strewn cataract and impressed upon them the necessity of getting a pilot. It was certain death, they argued, without one. Nevertheless the Englishmen, remembering how the dangers of the various rapids had been generally over-estimated, especially those of the last day, decided to get through alone if they could manage to pass Neu Orsova without being stopped by the authorities. It would be of little use, they thought,

to have a man in command who could not understand them, and whom they could not understand. In such a case it is more likely that an accident would occur owing to the confusion of tongues than to the dangers of the river.

"They are hailing us from the signal station on the Servian shore," observed the mate; "evidently they mean to insist on our having a pilot."

Both men therefore looked innocently the other way.

Thus they slipped past Neu Orsova. It was impossible for them to be pulled up now. Even a tug could not catch them.

The mate suggested tea, for the kettle was boiling, and the captain agreed. It was always characteristic of the *Walrus* that, whenever anything particularly dangerous or exciting was to be encountered, tea was served on the cabin top as an outward sign of contempt for the obstacle.

"We must look out soon," remarked the captain. "The rapids can be only a mile or two distant. We'll keep the sculls out for an emergency. It may be necessary to row a bit to keep in the channel, for the wind is uncertain. We are bang in the middle at present." He pointed towards the right bank: "There are the first lot of buoys. I suppose they mark the beginning of the cataract. We're well away from it anyhow. Look out—waves ahead!"

The *Walrus* was soon plunging about in rough

A BULGARIAN PEASANT

water, but, steadied by the sail she was carrying, she ploughed through it. There was not sufficient disturbance to interrupt the progress of tea, however; for even the mate, who was at the helm, steered with his feet and continued eating as if nothing had happened.

"Look there!" he exclaimed as he glanced astern; "a steamer is coming down!" She had evidently come from Alt Orsova and was rapidly overhauling the *Walrus*.

Suddenly she changed her course and steered for the water inside the buoys which the Englishmen had considered the danger-marks of the rapids. She proceeded along the Servian shore behind a stone dyke and emerged in a few minutes at a point down river.

The captain and mate at the same moment realised what they had done. Without knowing it, and during the uninterrupted progress of afternoon tea, they had braved the terrors of the Iron Gates. The steamer had taken the navigable channel, while the *Walrus* had come over the rocks!

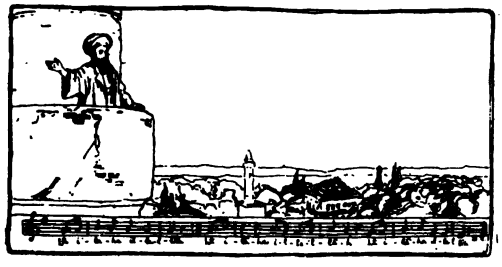
"Well," said the captain, "I move that the Iron Gates are a fraud."

The mate seconded the resolution.

Within two days, and after having been twice pulled up by the Roumanian police, the *Walrus* arrived at Vidin, the first Bulgarian town on the Danube.

The sudden change in the character of the streets

and of the people was very noticeable. White minarets appeared everywhere over the russet roofs of the quaint shops and stalls. The streets were thronged with picturesque figures, variously clad. Peasants from the country-side in gorgeous-coloured costumes, such as one associates with the operatic stage; patriarchal Greek priests, with flowing beards and long black robes; Turkish women with veiled faces—all these helped to form that medley of flaming colour that one sees only towards the Orient.



XIX

INTO THE

NEAR EAST

XIX

INTO THE NEAR EAST

THE *Walrus* lay at anchor for three days, and during that time the Englishmen were shown every honour and courtesy by the people of Vidin. Not the least of these attentions was an invitation to a ball. This was accepted with the greatest pleasure.

At eight o'clock on the evening of the dance two men who looked like pirates disappeared into the minute cabin of a sailing-boat. For the space of an hour they kept emerging alternately in various stages of costume, so that the other man could get room to perform the acrobatic movements necessary to dressing in a small space. Then they crept out of the low opening, washed, shaved, and immaculate in evening-dress.

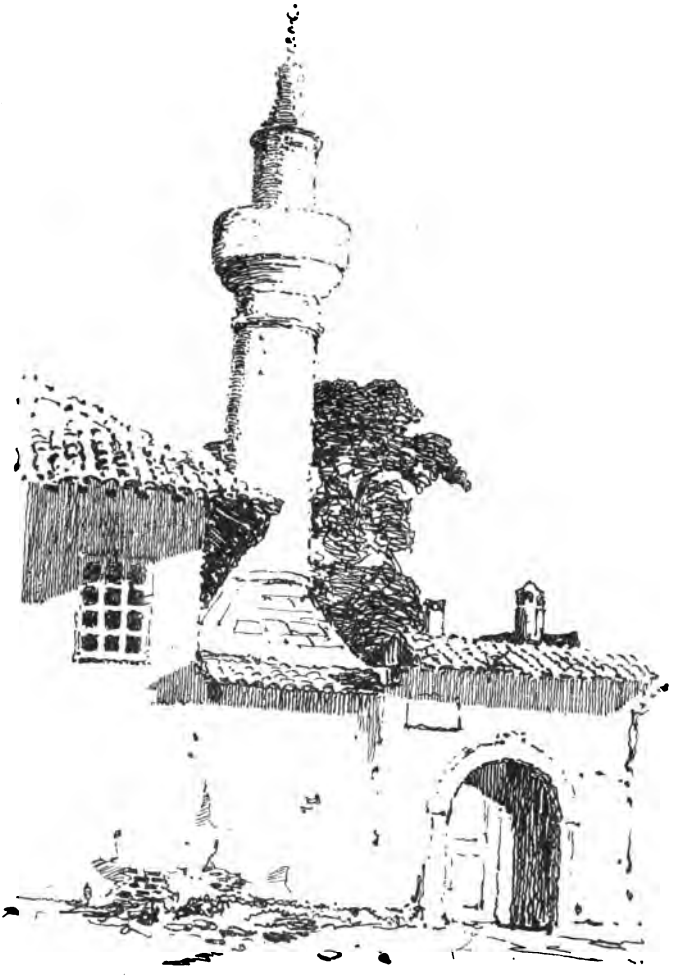
They entered the ball-room with some trepidation, for neither of them had the faintest knowledge of

Bulgarian etiquette, nor did they know a word of the language. The Prefect met them, however, and introduced them to a number of his friends, principally officers, and they in turn expressed themselves honoured to find them partners.

All this was done in French. The mate got on splendidly, for if his French broke down he launched out into German, which was generally understood. But the captain, unable to turn the conversation into channels where writing-cases and pen-knives are a necessary subject of comment—thus enabling him to bring out his recollections of school French—could not get very far, and was often utterly at sea.

When he was introduced to a very pretty girl, however, he put on his most courtly manner and with a profound bow asked in English if he might have the pleasure of a dance. Thereupon the girl smiled sweetly upon him and shook her head. This was a little discouraging, but he did not give up. Possibly she meant to indicate that she could not understand what he had said. He therefore repeated the request in what he considered French. Still, the reply was the same, a smile—this time almost a laugh—but a distinct shake of the head.

There was an amused twinkle in the girl's eyes, however, which encouraged him to pursue the subject. In desperation he asked if it was impossible for him to seek a partner. She smiled again—nay, she positively giggled—and nodded her head. This



A MOSQUE IN VIDIN

was too much. The captain retired crushed into the supper room.

"Aren't you dancing?" he said, as he caught sight of the mate.

"Yes, I've had two."

"Two! but the first is not over yet?"

"I know, but I've got a few tips from our Hungarian friend *re* Bulgarian customs. I find that you can take your partner only two or three times round the room: then you must deposit her again with her chaperone and seek another."

Just then an officer approached the captain and presented him to a lady. The captain asked the usual question and was answered "Yes." Thus encouraged he tried to start a conversation in English, but he found "no" was the only other word of that language she knew.

As they whirled round the room he gallantly kept up a spirited conversation in fragments of various languages. The girl seemed able to understand him, and so flattered and delighted was he at this that he forgot all about the three round rule and danced on to the end of the music.

As soon as he had led her to her place, the young Hungarian, who was the only English-speaking friend the two strangers had, touched him on the arm and beckoned him aside. Then he suggested delicately that the captain might like to be enlightened as to the national customs of the people. He himself was a stranger, and when he first came

he frequently found himself "putting his foot into it." It is not good form he went on to explain, to speak more than a word or two of a conventional kind to your partner. Any attempt at a conversation is considered indecorous. Thus the captain had been rendering himself very conspicuous.

A further explanation of Bulgarian manners revealed to the Englishman that a shake of the head meant "yes" and a nod indicated "no." Thus he came to understand the extraordinary conduct of the maiden whom he had sought as partner. He made amends, however, by securing her for the supper dance, where all custom is reversed and a partner may be talked to without any reserve.

Even under these happier circumstances, however, the captain was not much better off, for after nearly an hour's conversation, and after things were going quite well, a hitch occurred. Unfortunately the conversation had to be conducted by means of the Hungarian (who luckily was at the same table) and a young Bulgarian, both of whom acted as interpreters. The first of these knew English, but not Bulgarian, the second could manage Hungarian. Thus a sentence would start from the captain, be taken up by the first man and repeated in Hungarian to the second, who in turn translated it into Bulgarian. Thus it reached the lady's ears. Her remarks travelled back over the same route reversed, probably with many unconscious additions collected in transit.

When the captain, just before the end of supper, remarked that they (he and the girl) were now quite good friends, she received the statement with considerable coldness. The captain afterwards discovered that the sentiment which had reached her ears was to the effect that he would henceforth be a devout lover.

Meanwhile the mate, who, unlike his friend, was a good dancing man, was nearly obliterated with huge spangles and embossed medals which had been fastened upon him by various lady admirers, according to the local custom.

The gathering broke up as the sky began to lighten in the east, and the two Englishmen retraced their steps to the *Walrus*. They were not allowed to sleep very peacefully, however, for within two hours of their turning in, there began a babel of voices upon the quay.

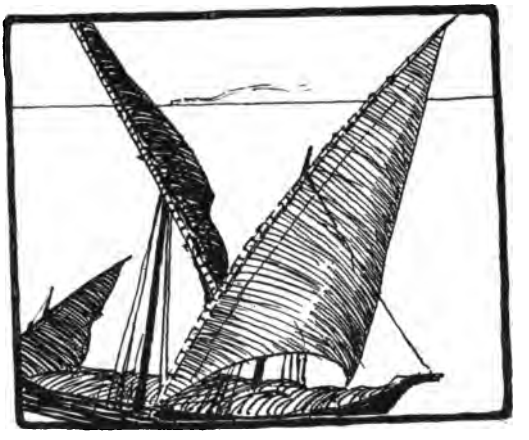
It was a feast-day—St. George's—and the Vidin people do not do things half-heartedly. Most of the town had turned out to welcome an excursion steamer from down river. Bands were playing and festivities were in full swing before the sun had climbed far into the sky.

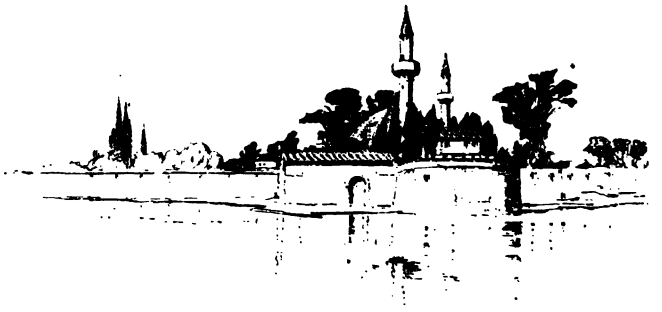
At eight o'clock, which seemed quite late in the day, half the town in holiday costume thronged to the church. There were no seats. The crowd stood patiently as at a promenade concert at Queen's Hall. The singing, as is the invariable custom in the Greek Church, was unaccompanied, but

wonderfully effective. It was impossible for the Englishmen to understand much that was going on. In a country where people shake their heads for "yes," and nod violently to indicate "no," there is not much chance of comprehending the symbolism and ritual of their religion.

XX

THE LAST LAP





XX

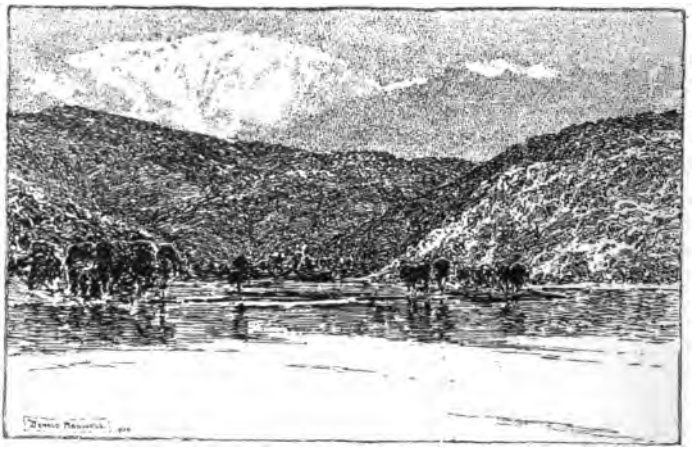
THE LAST LAP

It was towards the end of May that the *Walrus* began to draw near to the Black Sea—her destination. She had caught a distant view of the snow-clad Balkans and entered the broad reaches of the river beyond Silistria. On one side, the river was bounded by hills; on the other, vast and monotonous swamps extended. The floods had gone down and left tracks of decaying vegetation and mud. Upon this the sun beat with almost tropical heat, raising clouds of mosquitoes which positively thickened the air.

"We are two or three weeks too late," remarked the mate as he gazed one evening at the red light in the West. Between him and the sunset there rose and fell what looked like layers of smoke. In reality it was part of one vast cloud of mosquitoes.

"I suppose there is no chance of escaping them now that the hot weather has begun," gloomily returned the captain. "I'm bitten all over."

"So am I. It's a race against malaria. We must push on and reach the sea before one of us is bowled over with fever—or both of us. Great



A GLIMPSE OF THE BALKANS

Scott—think of it, down with fever out here away from everything. Judging from the temperature in the cabin to-day, I shouldn't much like to sample it as a hospital."

True, the heat had been awful. The thin roof of the cabin, under the direct rays of the scorching sun, had been no protection at all. It shut in the heat. In spite of continual drenching with water

BULGARIAN VILLAGE TYPES

above decks, the interior of the *Walrus* had been all day literally like an oven. The thought of under-

A BULGARIAN INTERIOR

going any kind of illness in such quarters was unthinkable.

Not the least difficulty in the way of rapid progress was the attitude of the police on both banks. On

the right was Bulgaria and on the left Roumania. Consequently whenever the boat accidentally approached the shore at any point, a sentry would challenge them, and under the impression that it had come across, demand a customs examination. This would lead generally to an hour's delay, and as these inspections were frequent—often twice a day—a great deal of time was wasted. Protests and passports seemed of no avail. At night it was impossible to move without being challenged and held up continually. The necessity, however, of pushing on was impressed upon both men.

"I vote we weigh anchor and drop down river until we are stopped," suggested the mate.

The captain agreed, and before it was dark, the *Walrus* had floated some miles down stream. There was no wind. The silence was broken only by the croaking of frogs. A shout from the Roumanian shore was evidently meant for a challenge, but the boat kept on her way.

"Take a scull the other side," whispered the captain, as he prepared to row.

Unostentatiously the *Walrus* began edging towards the Bulgarian side of the river. A distant fire burned a little ahead on the bank they had just left. It told of another group of sentries on the watch.

"Good thing we crossed," the captain thought. He could see figures moving about against the distant blaze. The boat drifted on another mile in silence. Then the mate gave his companion a nudge.

A STREET IN VIDIN

"Out of the frying-pan into the fire," he muttered, pointing to a light on the nearer shore. They were drifting down right on to another camp-fire on the Bulgarian bank. As they floated nearer they were hailed.

"All right," shouted the captain cheerily, "coming."

"Pretend to row like mad!" he added to the mate. It must have touched the hearts even of those rough soldiers at the water-side to see the frantic though fruitless efforts of the Englishmen to reach the shore before the current swept them out of sight. A passenger in the boat would have noticed that the sculls splashed up and down with great vigour, but did not move the craft one inch.

The fire was now far away up stream, but the shouting continued.

"Back her," jerked out the captain. "There will be another lot on the look-out further down. *They* may pursue in a boat."

The *Walrus* slowly crept across the river. Trees and bushes were thick along the bank at this part, and the chance of being seen from the shore was considerably lessened.

A challenge from a sentry suddenly rang out.

"Don't speak," whispered the captain. "We'll keep close into these overhanging trees. Don't show yourself. There is an opening ahead. There's sure to be another man there."

A second challenge—quite close.

"There are two of them," said the mate. "They're tearing along the bank, down stream. They evidently mean to stop us further down. Lie low, man, they might easily try a shot if we don't stop."

The *Walrus* brushed against some overhanging willow foliage. There was another open space ahead where the bank jutted out.

"Seize a branch and stop her," the captain whispered excitedly.

Both men caught at a bough at the same moment, but it sprang away before they could stop the boat. A second attempt was successful. A couple of ropes, made fast overhead, held firm and moored the boat.

"Excellent," chuckled the captain, "a splendid place for the night. They'll never see us in here right under their noses."

Suddenly he felt the mate's hand over his mouth. At the same moment two soldiers broke out from the bushes, and ran along the bank down stream.

"Bon voyage," muttered the mate, waving his hand. "Cold supper, to-night," he added later. "We can't show a light."

Intermittently all through the night the shrill sound of mosquitoes was audible. The mate was asleep as soon as he turned in, but the captain lay awake till dawn. Quinine had not warded off twitches of neuralgia — a new complaint with him.

A BULGARIAN WOMAN

The Mate's Last Watch

At dawn a breeze rose and blew steadily up stream. The captain, glad of something to do, went above and set sail. The *Walrus*, responding readily to a freshening wind, started off on a long tack toward the Bulgarian shore, and in a few minutes was out of the way of the Roumanian sentries who had come so near on the previous night.

The travellers were now within a few days' journey of the Black Sea. A head wind prevailed, however, and tacking continually in very rough water was a wearisome business. The river became broader, and often when it blew hard it was difficult to distinguish from the sea. Shipping of a curious old-world type became more and more frequent. Small fishing-boats with pointed sails could be seen hugging the shore, and there was every evidence that the end of the journey was at hand.

It was soon clear, too, that the captain was down with malaria. The mate took double duty during most of the day while the invalid lay in his bunk. It was useless to stop, however, for the country is very thinly populated, and the chance of getting a homeward-bound ship at Sulina was worth any hardship.

The mate worked like a horse, and on the last day took a twenty-four hours' watch, for the captain was now unable to work at all. Indeed, the invalid was getting difficult to manage. He had imagined all the evening that he was a book, and a book not properly bound. The rugs over him became in his

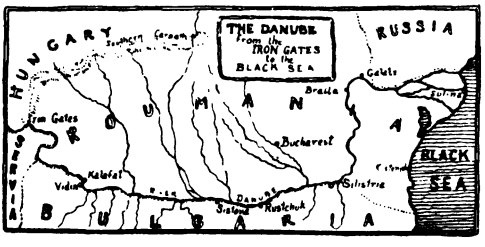
distorted imagination sheets of paper which could not be stitched in their right place. In the night he got up and started unmooring the boat, but was carried back again and shut down below.

Nearly tired out himself, the mate picked up a tow near Galatz, and brought the *Walrus* safe and sound into Sulina.

Then he went ashore to get a doctor, leaving his patient, as he thought, asleep.

But the invalid was dimly conscious that the boat was riding at anchor and occasionally bumping against a quay. His curiosity conquered his weakness, and, rousing himself, he crawled to the cabin door and looked out. He could see a long breakwater and a green expanse stretching away to the horizon.

It was the Black Sea.



THE END.